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A NEW
ESTIMATE
OF
MANNERS and PRINCIPLES:

Being a COMPARISON between
Ancient and Modern TIMES,

In the three Great Articles

OF

Knowledge, Happiness, and Virtue;

Both with Respect

To MANKIND at Large,

AND TO

This KINGDOM in Particular.

— *Demo unum, demo et item unum ;
Dum cadat elusus ratione ruentis acervi,
Qui redit in fastos, et VIRTUTEM AESTIMAT ANNIS.*

C A M B R I D G E,

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AN
A P O L O G Y

TO THE
AUTHOR of a former *Estimate.*

SIR,

WHEN I presumed to call my present production, *A New Estimate*; I did not intend to have the spurious issue laid at your door. Far be the thought from me, of attempting to injure any man's fair fame, by such base means! besides, the make and features of my poor offspring are so totally unlike your's, that an imposition of that kind, had I aimed at it, would have been too glaring to pass undetected.

I will freely own to you therefore, that it was merely a Bookseller's consideration, which induced me to borrow the title of your late, celebrated work: I was told, that the sale of a Book depended intirely upon the name it bore; which indeed I was inclined beforehand to think might, in a great measure, be the case; though, I own, I never, till now, apprehended it's meaning to be, what I find it is, not a metaphorical one, but strictly literal; not signifying the reputation of a book, but merely it's title-page. And it seems, Booksellers are as shy of standing for a book, as some Godfathers are, in another instance; unless they can have the naming of the Brat, when they attend, with other Gossips, on the due celebration of that rite. I hope therefore, a young Author, who would make his appearance in the world with as much advantage, as he could, may be excused for endeavouring to usher in his first performance under a favorite name.

But

But I have more than this to plead in my defence; for I find, what I have done is no more, than what is constantly practised, and is imposed as a kind of tax upon you great Authors; which, by custom, you are obliged to submit to: no sooner comes out *High life below stairs*, and has, what they call, a Run; but out pops a poultry imitation, intitled, *Low life above stairs*. No wonder then, if, after a valuable book is published, called an *Estimate*, you should see following, at a proper distance, a *New Estimate*; which perhaps, for the future, will come out, year after year, like a new year's Almanac, or a new Memorandum Book.

But however alike I may be, in other respects, to my brother Imitators; I cannot help claiming this superiority to myself, that I fairly declare, how the case stands; whereas I find, this is a point, which, in general, is most industriously concealed: for, upon examining with the utmost diligence, I

cannot, in all that numberless train of Magazines, with which the literary world is at present so plentifully stor'd, discover one, that has paid the least respect or acknowledgment to Mr. E. *Cave*, at St. John's Gate; though the undoubted and indisputable, original Author of the first of these commodious repositories of human learning, commonly called, *The Gentleman's Magazine*. Neither can I help observing, in what a barefaced manner Mr. *Baldwin*, Mr. *Newbery*, Mr. *Sheepay*, and others yearly go on to publish, what they are pleased to call, their *Pocket Companions*, *Daily Journals*, &c. without once taking notice of what Mess^{rs} *R. & J. Dodsley* constantly inform them of, that *Their's*, "as it was the *first*, so it is still the *best* book of the kind."

I shall mention but one thing more in my vindication; that I have stayed long enough to see, whether you would continue the work, or no. But, though you had now so fair an opportunity, at the

the end of the glorious 1759, of telling your countrymen better things; and of shewing the wonderful and surprising efficacy of your writings; which, in so short a time, have brought about such an effectual alteration in the manners of his Majesty's subjects; yet I perceive, you have let it slip: which inclines me to think, you have intirely given up the business of *Estimate-making*. And therefore I look upon myself as fully excused for attempting to avail myself of the opening, to set up in that branch of trade; in which, if I am but so happy, as to give as much satisfaction to those, who shall honor me with their custom, as you did; I shall ever esteem it one of the most fortunate events in my whole life.

Thinking myself, by this time, fully justified in your opinion for the step I have taken, I am emboldened to take the farther liberty of making your modesty give way to my importunity, whilst I supply what I suppose you

thought would not come so properly from yourself, and enlarge a little on the merit of your late, inestimable *Estimate.*

When one reads in it then the following, animated description of the *ruling manners* of this kingdom, which obtained only two years ago: "A man " who should go out of the common " road of life, in pursuit of glory, and " serve the public at the expence of his " ease, his fortune, or his pleasure, " would be stared and laughed at in " every fashionable circle, as a silly " fellow, who meddled with things that " did not concern him: as an ideot, " who preferred shadows to realities, " and needless toil to pleasurable enjoy- " ment." And, that "The laurel wreath, " once aspired after as the highest object " of ambition, would now be rated at " the market price of it's materials, and " derided as a *three-penny Crown.*" When one reads these, I say, and some other *similar* passages in your book, and

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hears you farther declare, that “ A “ change of manners, and principles “ may be justly regarded as an impossi- “ ble event, during the present age; “ and rather to be wished than hoped “ for in the next;” and yet perceives at the same time, that this change has in fact already happened; to such a degree, that they, who were then, as you tenderly express it, *the contempt of Europe*, are now become the terror of it: to what can one ascribe such an amazing alteration? To nothing, am I ready to answer, since miracles have ceased, but to the writings of a certain great author; which undoubtedly contained the grand specific, that has wrought this cure: which by some secret and insensible kind of operation has produced such sudden and surprizing effects, though the manner may be difficult to be explained; which, by diffusing at once such a new and unusual spirit through the camp and the navy, has so amply re- trieved

trieved the honor of our arms, and raised to so high a pitch the reputation of our country; which, by it's wonderful influence in rouzing the indolent, and animating the careless; in giving manliness to the effeminate; public love to the selfish; and courage to the voluptuary; has thus totally changed the whole face of our affairs: and made the upper ranks of our fellow-subjects rise up in arms, as one man, with the true *spirit of union and defence*, in support of *British Liberty* at home; and abroad has caused a handful of *Englishmen* to baffle the whole power of *France*; in such a manner, as will make the plains of *Minden* vie, in future story, with those of *Agincourt* and *Cressi*: in short, has enabled the soft and delicate soldier not only to bear the common toils of war; but has carried him safely through the unusual hardship of a winter's campaign, in a most inclement season: whilst the poor, puny, sickly sailor has, by their salutiferous quality, been rendered

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ed equal to a conflict with enemies and elements at once.*

I know it will hurt you to have so much said of the great efficacy of your writings; because you disclaim all *Panaceas*, as the very *Empiricism of Politics*. But though you don't, act like the man, who sells the famous *Pectoral Drops*, or *grand renovating Elixir of life*; stand at the corner of a street, and flip bills into our hands, with directions to the true original warehouse; yet I cannot help concluding with the poet,

*Sunt verba et voces, — sunt certa piacula, quæ nos
Ter purè lecto possunt re-creare libello. scil. tuo.*

Which I think, now the secret is out, would not make a bad motto to the *sixteenth edition* of your book.

This indeed was a point, which you most carefully kept out of sight; and I flatter myself, I can guess the reason, why you did so. You plainly saw, that

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* Alluding to Sir *Edward Hawke's* Victory.

we wanted physic; and yet thought, we were so childish, there would be no getting us to take any, if offered in the form of a pill or a bolus; (that is, under the disgusting appearance of direct advice:) and therefore you prudently intimated, you intended no such thing: though at the same time you were administering the proper remedies under the pleasing vehicle of an Estimate: when instantly, the disorders were removed; the noxious humors passed off; and, what is very surprizing, we had swallowed our cure, without knowing any thing of the matter.

I am aware, it will be said, that you have had many and able coadjutors in this matter: people, who are envious of letting one man bear away such a load of praise, will talk, some of *two*, some often or twenty, *Great Men*, who must share this honor with you. But what signify a parcel of names, that serve only to fill the mouths of a mob; your *Wolfe's*, *Hawke's*, or *Boscawen's*! what could

could these have done, without your assistance? I have but one reason for asking that question, and I desire no other, it is so full to the purpose; "They were in being before you "wrote your book; what did they "do then?"

In short, when I reflect upon this, I know not, whether I am more chagrined or surprised to observe, that your singular merit has past unregarded by the H--se of C----ns on this occasion; who, whilst they have been so liberal in v-t-ng thanks to many inferior actors, have never taken the least notice of the *A-th-r* of the *Eft-m-te*; though he appears, so clearly, to have been the main-spring, which put the whole machine in motion.

As far as this omission can be supplied by the voice of a single person, I beg leave, in this public manner, to offer you my most humble congratulations on the great success of your writings, — hoping, that no neglect of others

thers will deprive us of the still greater benefit to be expected from your larger Work. I beg leave to subscribe myself,

With all the due deference,

and distance,

Which a poor bumble monosyllable,
at the bottom of one of your own pages,
observes towards it's superiors,

Yours.

AN

EXPLANATION

OF THE

DESIGN of this ESTIMATE,

ADDRESSED

To the Reverend and Learned
The DEAN of LINCOLN.

SIR,

I Know no piece of vanity more common, or which perhaps is more excusable (especially when we are got amongst strangers) than to pretend an acquaintance with a person of some consequence, who is generally known, and thought well of. We cannot help flattering ourselves with the hopes, that they, in whose company we are engaged, will immediately ascribe a part of his worth to us; and that by this means we shall appear to them, in a more respectable point of view: neither can it be doubted, but that if the business be properly managed, a profession may be thus raised in our favor, which will serve, like a letter recommendatory;

The reaſon, which induced me to make use of your Name on this occaſion, I need only tell to *you*, for every body else will ſee of course, that it was an affectation of the above ſort : I knew you to be one, who was a friend to learning, and indeed to every thing, that is worthy ; I was therefore willing to have it thought, that you were a friend to me.

But how far I can have any pretence to your friendſhip in this instance, is only to be ſeen by my declar ing the design, I have in view, and those conſiderations, which gave riſe to it.

The End then pro poſed in the preſent treatiſe, which I have ventured to lay before you and the public, Is, firſt of all, " To vindicate the ways of God to men," by opening to their view, in ſome degree, a regular plan of his proceedings with them ; from which I hope to make it appear, that there has been a continual *Tendency to the better* in all human affairs. The manner, in which I have attempted to do this, is by making the faireſt Estimate, I could, both of thoſe

Prin-

Principles, under which mankind seem to have acted at different periods of their existence; and also of those *Manners*, which have characterised the several ages of the world.

Another part of my design is, "To enlarge men's notions a little," by offering to their consideration a set of free and liberal sentiments, though not always immediately tending to the above principal point.

Lastly, I have endeavoured to draw a fairer picture of the *Present Times*, than that, offered to the public in *a late Estimate*: not that I mean to enter into any particular examination, either of the candor or abilities shewn in that work: an inquiry of that sort, " might justly be regarded, as a research rather curious, than necessary; since (as the author well observes, pag. 203,) *a single reflection on the present state of the kingdom may seem to stand in the place of a thousand proofs*,"  That the Doctor was —— MISTAKEN.

Men are welcome, provided they allow the design to be good, to say, if they think so, that the execution is not answerable. I am not so solicitous about their opinion in this respect, as in the other: the one I could not well remedy; the other I easily might:

and I know, that you and all candid judges, who are convinced of the good intention, will make all proper allowances, for the method of pursuing it. As to the fastidious and critical reader, whose supreme pleasure may consist in the discovery of mistakes and inaccuracies, I shall not trouble myself to bespeak his clemency and indulgence by the common pleas of hurry, avocations, &c; since I have, in all probability, consulted his satisfaction more, by affording materials for his fault-finding observation to employ itself upon, than I could have done, by any other means whatever.*

Many things, I am sensible, are but slightly touched upon, which might have deserved a fuller disquisition. Others, perhaps, have been dwelt upon even to satiety and disgust: whilst many more, which may be thought to have some connexion with this inquiry, have been intirely omitted. This however is seemingly the case with most

books

* As I believe myself to be the first, who ever made use of this plea, in favor of bad writing, I expect to be allowed the full benefit of it, during my fourteen years property in this book; and if ever write another, I hope it will either stand less in need of an excuse; or that I shall have found out by that time, a better.

books published; and may therefore possibly be pardoned in one, consisting of such various materials, as the present; especially by those, who consider, what a trouble it is even to write a very indifferent book; and, that this trouble is usually undertaken, either for their pleasure or profit; however the author may be deceived in his expectation. I have, in particular, entered very sparingly into modern politics: for whatever inclination I might have, as an *Englishman*, to gratify the reader on this subject; I found, that by having lived at a distance from the WORLD, though books might have furnished me with some general notions, I should descend to particulars with an awkwardness, which would only expose me to the ridicule of men, acquainted with AFFAIRS.*

With regard to the liberty I have taken of throwing a part of my sentiments into
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* It is to be hoped however, that this frank confession, will not subject me to the *sad* mortification of having it retorted upon me; that, for the same reason, I should have omitted many other particulars. Indeed, gentle reader, however I may be mistaken, these particulars were *only* inserted, because they seemed to fall, if not more within my reach, at least more within that province, of which I have assumed the cognisance, than the others.

the form of notes, it was done principally for my own ease; but with a distant view, at the same time, to that of the reader; who, if he is satisfied with what he meets with in the text, need not trouble himself with looking into the notes: but, if in any matter he requires farther information, he may perhaps sometimes find it in that part, which is printed in a smaller character, in order to save the trouble of connexion, and at the same time avoid embarrassment. I have besides, now and then, when I thought myself most open to the force of banter, endeavoured to fly for refuge to a note; with what success, can only be known from the event.

As to the plan, by which I suppose Providence to have acted; it is not offered to the public, much less to you, Sir, as any new discovery, arising from my own reason or observation: I own this with the greater pleasure; as it has been already so much better recommended to people's attention, by the name and writings of a far more able advocate: * whose excellent Discourse on *The Progress of Natural Religion and Science*, whoever reads with sufficient attention, will have no need to come here for farther conviction;

* Dr. Law, Master of St. Peter's College, Cambridge.

iction; nor would he, I am afraid, find it, if he did. However as * light troops are of use in war, as well as the more regular and embodied soldiery; so may it also perhaps be of service, in the defence of truth, to pursue sometimes a looser or less disciplined method, as well as a closer and more correct way of reasoning.

The end proposed is certainly such a one, as every thinking man must be heartily desirous of seeing satisfactorily made out: to all of whom it cannot but have been matter of frequent concern, to reflect upon the many incongruous, absurd, and unworthy notions; which have, from time to time, and from one end of the earth to the other, been entertained of the Deity, and his dealings with his creatures, — so derogatory to his honor, and detrimental to their happiness! not only by the unenlightened *Indian*, who boils and bakes the object of his worship; and

* I am well aware, that these troops cut but a poor figure, in "The famous battle, fought some years ago in St. James's library;" but either nature or fate impelled me so strongly, that I could not help enlisting into this very corps. — I must therefore patiently submit to all the ridicule, which my conduct justly deserves.

and whom therefore one can more readily allow to think, what he pleases, of his own workmanship; but by the more rational heathen: not only by the *Monks* and *Copti's*; but by the more informed part of the christian world; — who have seemingly taken all the pains they could, to make “The religion of God of none effect;” — who have labored, one should think, only to establish the truth of that prophecy of our Saviour, “That he was not come to bring peace on earth, but a sword;” — who, as if the religion, which he taught, had been incomplete, have been ever busy in supplying it's defects by absurd additions of their own; “brick, straw, stubble!” which have been put together with what, in every sense of the word, may be justly called “untempered morter;” — who have been continually disputing and fighting for formularies and creeds, for what men should believe, without troubling their heads about what they practised. — Nay, of so much greater importance have they judged the first of these articles to be, than the latter; that, in order to teach men to believe, what they could either never know at all, or least never know to be right; they have suffered, or rather indeed

indeed taught, them to do, what they could not but know to be wrong.

By these means, whilst opposite sides have been contending for the right of prescribing to each other's consciences ; frequently in matters, with which the consciences of neither had any thing at all to do ; religion, that is, every thing, which deserves that name, has lain, like a litigated estate, neglected by both parties ; and in consequence of that, instead of it's genuine fruits, when properly cultivated, righteousness and peace ; has produced all the evil weeds of envy, rancour, malice, and revenge.

At one time, as if the Deity could not be good, unless men were bad ; a great deal of pains has been taken to represent us, as a set of unnatural, mishapen monsters, all vileness and deformity,—contrary to the express word of God himself ; who has declared, that whatever he created, "was very good ;" which surely we never can look upon, as the temporary applause of a day only. It would be a piece of cunning of so low a kind, that we should hardly pardon it in the meanest artificer ; who, knowing, that his workmanship would certainly fall in pieces to-morrow, should seize the present moment to

set off and exalt his extraordinary performance. How shall men dare then to ascribe any thing, like this, to the Author of all truth and perfection !

At another time, as if men could not be good, unless the Deity were bad ; the kind, beneficent Father of mankind has been represented, as their great enemy and destroyer ; has been dressed in all the fiery robes of burning indignation, and armed with terror and relentless fury !

How far such representations might be necessary in the grosser ages of the world, one cannot well pretend to determine : neither would it be easy to say, whether they might not even still be usefully applied to the lower class of mankind ; whose dull mind is incapable of being much affected by any generous or exalted ideas ; and who cannot receive any lasting impressions, but from objects, which strike the senses : this however one may safely venture to affirm, that the bawling methodist, who pours forth storms of hail, fire and brimstone, upon the ignorant, gaping, and affrighted multitude, that attend him, and greedily drink in his precious instructions, is more justifiable, than the learned divine, who endeavours, in his

labored volumes, to impose an absurd belief on the more rational part of mankind.

But what will not a blind attachment to systems do? In order to procure esteem and veneration for certain human establishments, of worth and excellency enough, considered merely as such; men have industriously taken pains, and have unhappily succeeded in their endeavours, to make them be looked upon, as essential parts of christianity itself; which strange proceeding has brought with it this very natural consequence, besides many others equally aukward; that, by it's means, the cause of our holy religion, and the decrees of councils and synods, (two extremely different things!) have been put upon the same issue;— from whence we may justly derive no small part of that scepticism and infidelity, which has lately deluged a neighbouring kingdom, and has flowed even hither:— for men, having been taught to look upon the church of Christ and his Religion to be the same thing, and having been able to discover some flaws in the former, have too hastily concluded, that the same might be met with in the latter.

Things however are not quite so bad amongst us; may we duly thank God for it!

it! — that spirit of gentleness and tolerancy in our church, — that great moderation in claiming no absolute authority over men's consciences, in matters of belief, has secured us from a great part of this mischief: — but even we, I doubt, have been in some degree blameable.

That the christian religion at large is calculated to promote the good of mankind in general, is not perhaps more true, than that particular modes of it are peculiarly suited, to advance the happiness of particular sets of men, united together, under certain laws, in the same society: — wherever then the wisdom of Lawgivers has been such, as to model the religion of a country in such a manner, as may best suit the frame of government, there established; (provided there be in it nothing directly contrary to the doctrine of Christ,) and experience has shewn, that it is peculiarly adapted to the genius of the inhabitants, and circumstances of the kingdom; men can scarce too strenuously labor to inculcate a love and esteem for this form of worship among the people.

Yet, if they go so far as to make them believe the worth of it consists intirely in a par-

particular determined form of prayer, or in certain indifferent rites and ceremonies; this inconvenience will attend their zeal,—that (if afterwards, either by a change of circumstances; by the governments having undergone some alteration; or by a farther insight into things, it should be discovered, that some amendments might be made in this form of worship,) there will be found such an attachment in the common people to their old forms, that it would be extremely hazardous to risque an innovation; as ninety-nine out of a hundred of these would fancy, you were rooting up religion itself.

So that in time, when, by such alterations, as the wisdom of succeeding ages would discover to be for the better, the civil government was become more and more perfect and complete; the established religion, which should have kept pace with it, will be the most *imperfect thing in it, and perhaps

* Just as the holy Scriptures are likely to become the most incorrect books amongst us, by that absurd position, that even the words of them, being dictated, nay the very fingers of the penmen, who transcribed them, being guided, by unerring inspiration, they cannot admit of the ordinary rules of criticism.

There is more meaning in that distinction of **HIGH CHURCH** and *Low Church*, so bandied about in a late reign, than there is in most other distinctions, which were then, or have been since, in use among us. What the learned *Montesquieu* observes, of the popish religion being suited to absolute monarchies, and the protestant to those, where liberty is established by law, is true in some degree of the different forms of protestantism itself; so that in a kingdom, where the prerogative of the crown has been gradually lessened, and liberty better secured, some high-flown notions in Church policy might possibly be lowered for the better.

But what then? Are we quietly to sit still, and patiently to hear the cavils of every novice, who pretends to find fault with what he cannot mend? Not so neither. All that is here meant is only to recommend it, as a point of prudence, to lessen, as much as we can, the number of those things, that lie open to the attempts of our adversaries.

By keeping up, more for show, than any real use, large and extensive outworks, many of which are at best capable of but a weak

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defence, we do in some sort endanger or expose the citadel itself; since our enemies will be forward to interpret every slight advantage, which they may accidentally gain against one of these, as if it affected the main body. Whereas, by voluntarily surrendering some of the most advanced and least tenable posts, our attention in defending the rest would be less distracted; and these, by being nearer to the main work, against which, we are told, "the most fiery darts of our worst enemy shall never be able to prevail," would receive shelter from, as well as give strength to, it.

However it may be said, that it is not only the private œconomy of a particular Church, which is called in question; but that even the great general dispensations of Providence itself are daringly attacked. Notwithstanding the reprobation in the Gospel, "Shall the thing formed, say to him "that formed it, why hast thou made me "thus?" Men have ever made it their practice, and it scarce can be doubted, but that they ever will continue to inquire, why they were made, as they are; and indeed with some show of reason too, provided they can bring themselves to think, that their circum-

circumstances and accommodations are not so good, as they might have been: the impious ridicule upon Providence, implied in the answer of the *Dervise* in * *Candide*, would otherwise have too much foundation; “Thinkest thou, says he, when his “sublime Highness sends a vessel to *Egypt*, “that he concerns himself at all, whether “the Mice on board have room or not?” “What would you have one do then, “said *Pangloss*? ” “Hold your tongue, said “the *Dervise*.”

Let us see rather, what it is, which these complainers would have; and how far it may appear to have been in the power of their Creator to satisfy them. To speak according to the narrowness of our ideas, there seems

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* The Author of this profane piece of burlesque, has raked together all the little circumstances, that seem to throw a shade upon God's moral government, many of which arise merely from the necessary imperfection of human governments and institutions; and even these he has been mean enough to misrepresent: by such low artifice has he attempted to laugh us out of the belief of a divine superintendency: his attempt would have been just as wise, had he endeavoured to prove, that the Sun did not shine, because an accidental cloud or eclipse may sometimes intervene, and for a while intercept a part of its brightness from our view.

to have been only two things in the choice of the Deity, when he determined to create Mankind ; either to place them in a certain subordinate degree of happiness, with powers to promote themselves to higher degrees ; or to have given them the highest possible happiness at once : which last, it is likely, is the very thing, which they, who are dissatisfied with their present condition, long for ; but which, if carefully attended to, will perhaps be found to be an impossible case ; for it seemingly implies a contradiction, even for infinite power itself to make any positive degree of happiness, how great soever, the greatest possible,—between what is infinite, and the next step to it, there must always be an immeasurable void, which will ever afford room for the supposition of going farther and farther, without coming at all to any determinate end :—so that the only way, which our beneficent Creator had of communicating the greatest happiness to his Creatures, was by setting no bounds to it, but allowing us to go on from one degree to another, in an endless progression. Had the Deity placed us in any fixed, determined degree of happiness, with understanding enough to see, that there might be higher degrees,

grees, we should have been losers by this appointment.

If it be still said, that, even allowing this progressive state to be the best, we might have set out from a higher step in the scale; it might be answered, that wherever the first step was taken, there would lie the same matter of complaint against it, as against the present.

In fact, if we were to be placed in a state of morality; that is, in such a state, as to be able, by our own choice, to become the authors of our own happiness or misery; such an allotment of things, as at present obtains, seems in some sort necessary; where the balance is pretty near equally suspended: so that there should be no great force upon the will, or prepollency in favor of one side, more than the other.— All that is wanting, or can be desired in such a state, is, that the proportion of good may appear so sufficiently above the bad, that we may with reason conclude, the Deity had our happiness in view at creation: — and if it should be farther evident, that this happiness is growing daily greater; we have the fairest argument, which analogy can afford, that it will continue for ever to do so: which is also greatly strengthened by that stretch and

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tendency, which every one must experience in his mind, to get forward; by that appetency after future things, that grasping after happiness, that lies still beyond our reach; which certainly was never implanted in our nature merely to mock and disappoint us.

The case however of those, who may abuse their liberty of choice to their own destruction, may still seem to stand in our way: if the number of these should be greater, or indeed bear any considerable proportion to those, who use their freedom rightly; it may afford some plausible matter for objection to those, who would impeach the goodness of their Maker,— as if he had acted contrary to that goodness, in placing his creatures in such precarious circumstances, as he must know before-hand would prove the occasion of falling to so many.

Now we may observe by the way, that in whatever circumstances the Deity had placed us; unless he had made us mere necessary agents, (if such two terms can agree) a possibility of falling must ever have been annexed to our condition: — and “as “all scripture is written for our admonition,” perhaps the story of *Adam* in paradise, and that of the fallen Angels too might both be

delivered with this view, to inform us, that we might have forfeited our happiness, however innocent we were at first, or how high soever, in the scale of Beings, our rank had been assigned us.

But still that God should create any Beings upon such terms, as that many of them should become infinitely and eternally miserable, may not seem so easy to be got over; or reconciled to our notions of his goodness.

This indeed is a *hard saying*; and, unless the scriptures be absolute in enjoining the belief of it, “who would willingly receive it?” When one considers, how very few of our actions are in themselves grossly sinful; how almost all of them borrow their heinous quality, merely from their being detrimental to the happiness of our fellow-creatures; which God was willing by all means to secure: and when one farther considers, for how small a pittance of time the worst of our actions, even murder itself, (which seems to be the highest crime we are capable of committing,) will probably interrupt the happiness of our brother; our reason reluctantly concludes, that the punishment of sin will be strictly eternal.— That there should be a distinction made hereafter between

the

the good and bad; and that the latter should be punished for their misdeeds; reason, scripture, every thing, calls aloud for: —but humanity enforces us to wish, that all suffering may tend to the reformation of the sufferers; and that, even in punishment, “God would remember mercy!”

It is easy to reply to this way of talking, that it proceeds rather from conscious guilt and fearful apprehensions, than from unprejudiced conclusions: but surely it is better even to err that way, than for human arrogance to lift itself so high, as impiously to condemn men with more rigour, than God has condemned them, and daringly to consign over to everlasting perdition those, whom God may have created to be ultimately happy: — surely he who has goodness enough to declare himself willing, that “None should perish, but that all should be ‘saved,’ ” has also wisdom enough to contrive the means of this, though they are fitly hid from us at present.

Perhaps, if it had received any countenance from scripture, something like the doctrine of *Pythagoras* would have easily recommended itself to our belief: for, that nothing, which has once tasted the blessing

of existence, will ever intirely cease to be, is a principle highly agreeable to our reason; as we cannot well conceive any other motive for it's first creation, than the Deity's willing it to be happy: and as there is "no variableness, nor shadow of turning in him," we might therefore conclude, that the same motive would ever retain it's full force.

Supposing then existence not to be lost, of what import can it be, (provided this is not brought about by any sinful act,) that it's course may accidentally be diverted into another channel, where it will flow on with less interruption?

Beings of a day, as we are, can form but imperfect notions of such vast designs, as are and have been, the business of eternity. Notwithstanding our boasted privilege of *looking before and after*; all, we can clearly see, is just the narrow spot, that lies around us; one scene perhaps, or less of the great drama, in which "all mankind are merely "players, as the poet calls them, who have "their exits and their entries;" and it matters not at all, whether one man has a longer part in this scene than another, as they will both so soon quit it to enter on the next: and we must stay the conclud-

ing

ing act to know, whether exact poetic justice has been done or not; enough for us, if we can in the mean time learn from what has past, what is most likely to be hereafter: if we can see just a distant opening of the plot, enough to lead us to guess with probability at the Catastrophe.

If then from those parts, which have been already acted, we can discover *a Tendency to the better* in things; we may rest satisfied, and safely conclude, that they will for ever go on in the same way. And that there is such *a tendency*, will, it is hoped, appear from the following Estimate. Not but it must be owned, there are many intricacies, which embarrass this plan: — though perhaps no difficulty, which stands in the way, is so hard to be got over, as to persuade people to think as well of those things, of which “familiarity, “according to the old proverb, has bred a “contempt,”* as of those, which they only
there-

* To use a familiar instance; how hardly do we bring ourselves to think, that Tom, Dick, or Harry, whom we remember boys, are grown even to be men; much more men of any consequence? Unless, by some means, they have been removed, for a time, from our sight and observation. And if it may be allowable to add an instance of much higher importance;

therefore admire, because they cannot see clearly, what they are.

I am afraid, Sir, you will look upon this Address, as already carried to too great a length; yet, before I conclude it, I must beg leave to observe, that whatever becomes of the argument, when extended to the world at large; it must affect every lover of science, and friend to this place, with the sincerest pleasure to think, that it is most strictly true, when applied to the state of this University: which is not more visibly improved in the outward appearance of it's structures and public buildings, than in the learning and manners of it's inhabitants. The minds of youth were never taught to think with a more becoming freedom; the only way, by which they can be taught to think right; or more strongly impressed with lively sentiments of true christian humanity; that is, a proper consideration of

their

tance; we know, that the greatest character, which ever adorned human nature, found no honor in his own country: "Is not this the carpenter's son; are "not his brethren and his sisters with us:" were arguments enough to induce men to believe, that he ought not to pretend to know more, than they did. On the other hand, how easily, and how constantly, are we bubbled by any foreign impostor? — But these considerations belong more properly to another place.

their own and other people's happiness ; which probably constitutes both the end and means of all true religion ; and seems to be the only impression, which, consistently with a free use of reason, can be stampt upon the mind, before it has attained the power of judging for itself. In consequence of this, there never was a time, when this *nursing MOTHER* of science could boast of so many sons, who were possessed of so much real and useful knowledge, or who practised more rational or more civilized manners ; especially among that part of them, who by their birth and fortune throw a splendor and dignity upon learning ; who always should endeavour, and who usually have it in their power, to make a greater progress in science, than others : these have lately in a more particular manner made it their study to excel in this, as they already do in all other advantages.*

Without

* It certainly is much to be wished, that the plan of education here were so enlarged, (if it could be consistently with the main end of our institution, the sending out into the world an able supply of men for the sacred Ministry,) as to induce young men of family and fortune to reside longer amongst us, than for the two or three early years, which usually bound their stay here. How much better

Without entering more minutely into the causes of this, we might appeal for a confirmation of the truth of it to every one, who is at all acquainted with our situation; whatever some, who live at a * distance, have, on that account, imagined to the contrary.

“ With

would this be, both for the community and themselves, than to have them almost under a necessity of going to some foreign University; where, however they may learn a more polite address, or other such like accomplishments, they certainly cannot learn more true knowledge?

* We might therefore easily be excused from giving any particular answer to them, if they had not received one already. + But at the same time, it must be owned, that a person of much greater consequence, than they; even the great Lord Bacon, who was in fact, what he, with more compliment, than truth, said of *Plato*, “ *Vir sublimis ingenii, qui* “ *que veluti ex rupe excelsa omnia circumspicie-* “ *bat,*” has bent his thoughts toward our institutions, and has left us the following observation upon them: “ *Defectus etiamnum aliis nobis observan-* “ *dus, magni certe momenti, neglectus quidam est,* “ *in Academiarum rectoribus, consultationis; in re-* “ *gibus five superioribus, visitationis; in hunc fi-* “ *nem, ut diligenter consideretur et perpendatur,* “ *utrum prælectiones, disputationes, aliaque exer-* “ *citia scholastica, antiquitus instituta et ad nostra* “ *usque tempora usitata, continuare fuerit ex usu,* “ *vel potius antiquare, aliaque meliora substituere.* “ *Etenim inter Majestatis tuæ (Jacobi I^{mi}) canones* “ *prudentissimos illum reperio. In omni vel consue-* “ *tudine*

+ See *Observations on the Present State of the English Universities, Occasioned by Dr. Davies's Account of the Education in them.*

With what gratitude then must we needs look upon those, who, by their liberality and

*“tudine vel exemplo, tempora spectanda sunt, quando
“primum res cæpta: in quibus si vel confusio regna-
“verit vel inscitia, derogat illud imprimis auctorati-
“rurum, atque omnia suspecta reddit. Quamobrem,
“quandoquidem Academiarum instituta plerum-
“que originem traxerint a temporibus bisce nostris
“haud paulo obscurioribus, et indoctioribus; eo
“magis convenit, ut examini denuo subjiciantur.”*

How far this might be intended to flatter that pedantic Monarch, of whose wisdom we have a specimen here given us, and who was always fond of having a hand in every thing, that related to religion or learning, may perhaps be difficult to determine: but that, what is said, is founded in truth, can admit of no dispute. Time, and the prudence of more modern Ages, may, and no doubt have greatly lessened the number of those things, which were formerly liable to exception. Yet he might be suspected of having more partiality, than sincere judgement, who should undertake to say, that nothing of this sort was now to be found amongst us. However it may best become us to leave these matters to the consideration of those, to whom the above-cited, great Author committed them. If, in the mean time, a private person may be indulged a wish upon the subject; mine should be, that the way to *Natural Knowledge* was rendered a little more easy amongst us, by having a supply given us of such things, as our slender incomes ill enable us to purchase ourselves. Our Schools should be furnished with good apparatus's for observations and experiments. Ample Stipends should be allotted to our Professors of Anatomy, Chemistry, and Botany; the whole to be forfeited on their ceasing to read Lectures, which should

xxviii *An Explanation of the*
and attention to our welfare, have afforded
the means of these improvements ; especially
on

should all be *Gratis*. And a Laboratory should be established, and endowed with a sufficient revenue to pay inferior Operators for their attendance, and also for supplying proper utensils and materials for going through a course of Chemistry ; where every one of the University, whose turn led him that way, might have free access to make, what trials he pleased. What would have made another part of this wish is already, it seems, in a fair way of being answered by our being upon the point of having a Physic Garden established, through the munificence of a very worthy Member of this place, Dr. *Walker* of *Trinity College*. And we already by a former benefaction have an exceeding good collection of Fossils, and a handsome appointment for a Lecturer.

It might not be absurd perhaps to add the following wish to the former, though about a matter of much less consequence ; — That all our public Disputations, were carried on in our own Language, and in a less confined way than that of syllogisms. People would blush at that nonsense, when cloathed in plain *English*, which assumes an air of importance, and even challenges respect, when dressed in very indifferent *Latin*. We might too, by this means, learn in time to talk in our own Tongue, with ease and elegance, instead of mangling and maiming another, which, at last, we shall speak but very imperfectly.

Wishes however, I am sensible are, at best, both exceeding slow Benefactors, and to the full as idle Reformers ! Possibly too, many a prudent man may shake his head at such empty things, as visionary projectors only dream of ; and many a good one may satisfy himself, that there cannot be much reformation wanting in those institutions, which have

always

on one great * Man, who has long been the liberal encourager and patron of every thing, which

always hitherto answered the ends, they were designed for: whilst many more may fancy, that it does not much signify, how such places, as these, are ordered, or regulated: — that the great matter is, to bring Men of letters together, who, like *Bees*, will do all the rest, that is expected from them of course,

*Principio sedes Apibus, statioque petenda,
Quo neque sit ventis aditus, &c.*

Now this may be, and probably is the principal thing; when you have already got Men of letters fit, and prepared to enter upon their several different pursuits and employments; just as we see it happen, about the Capitals of Kingdoms and other large Cities; where, without any other encouragement, than the mere friendly intercourse of Arts and Sciences with each other, the greatest progress in Learning is daily made. But the question at present is, how we shall be most likely to raise men of Learning, — whether by following that method, which was chalked out to us in very ignorant Ages, when almost all the knowledge in the world was shut up in *Greek* and *Latin*, and was only to be acquired by a previous insight into their idiomis, and phrases; or whether we should look out for some new one now, when circumstances are intirely changed; and not go on to waste the best part of our time and attention in gaining an acquaintance with those Languages, which, when understood, will not furnish us with half the knowledge to be met with in our own; not but, however it's use may cease, it must always continue to be matter of the highest entertainment, as well as ornament too to the Scholar, to be able to read the wisdom of former Ages, in those Languages, in which it was originally wrote.

* Our CHANCELLOR.

which might tend to raise the reputation of
this our *Athens*?

After these, they claim the next share of
our praise, by whose prudent management,
the beneficence of others has been made to
answer the end, it was designed for: amongst
the first of which number, the DEAN of
LINCOLN's Name, if I should omit it, cannot
fail to be reckoned by every body else.

I am,

SIR,

Your most obliged,

and most obedient,

umble Servant,

CAMBRIDGE,
March 20. 1760.

The AUTHOR.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

LWhat is here offered to the public makes only a part of the Author's Design: but this being his first Introduction to the Reader, he was not willing to make the visit of Ceremony too long. — Speedily however will be published Parts the third and fourth of this Estimate, on the Happiness and Virtue of Mankind; in which Mr. Rousseau's opinions will be particularly confidered: and Part the fifth, which will be an Application of the whole to our own Times and Circumstances.

A NEW
ESTIMATE
OF
MANNERS and PRINCIPLES.

PART I.

IN WHICH
Some common Opinions and Prejudices
are confidered.

Most humbly,
and most dutifullly,
inscribed

to Him who deserves the following Compliment,
more than ever *Cæsar* did.

*Sed Tuus hoc populus sapiens et justus in uno
Te nostris ducibus, Te Graiis anteferendo,
Cætera nequaquam simili ratione modoque
Æstimat; et nisi quæ terris semota, suisque
Temporibus defuncta videt, fastidit et odit.*

HOR. Ep. 1. Lib. 2.

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A NEW
ESTIMATE
OF
MANNERS and PRINCIPLES.

CHAP. I.
INTRODUCTION.

IT has now been so long the practice to cry up the excellence of former times, and to lament modern degeneracy, that an attempt to introduce a different rule of judging must expect to meet with no very favorable reception. Opinions of long establishment in the world, like old customs, acquire so much sanctity, that whoever does not pay the most reverential regard to them, is sure to be looked upon with an eye of jealousy and distrust, as if he were intending no good to mankind.

They especially, who, being either unable or unwilling to judge for themselves, suit

their opinions, as they do their clothes, to the fashion of the times, are apt to be exceedingly alarmed at any innovation; which, considering the small trouble an alteration of this sort can cost them, one would hardly expect: but true and genuine prejudice, being, both by nature and habit, nearly related to the old carrier's horse, will for ever follow the bells of it's leader; and is so accustomed to plod on, at the same dull rate, and in the same miry path, after others; that it is odds, but it will, right obstinately, kick at him, who shall pretend to direct it better, or to interfere at all with it's sacred, hereditary right of going on, unmolested, in the wrong itself; and of leading as many after it, as it can, into the same mistakes.

Indeed I am not well satisfied, how far it is either right for one man to interrupt another in the quiet possession of his opinion, or reasonable to expect a peaceable submission in this case. For there grows up such a tender connexion between the mind and a favorite notion, once received, that the most ingenuous frequently find a strong reluctance against parting with it.

But

But certainly if ever this be right or reasonable, it is so, when a change will manifestly be for the better ; when we attempt to disperse the gloom of melancholy and superstition, and in it's stead open to the mind a more agreeable prospect. Neither can it be unwarrantable, one should think, with such an end in view, especially when there is likely to be no small degree of prejudice against us, should we endeavour to raise a little favorable partiality on our own side. One may surely venture therefore, without being suspected of dealing unfairly, to suggest, at setting out, that it is much more a man's interest to think well of present times and circumstances, in which his own lot of life is cast, than of any past period, in which he can have no concern ; and that every one, who desires to be happy, should wish at least, it might be true, that he was more likely to be so now, than he could have been, had he lived at any other time.

They, however, who see and think for themselves, and do not take their opinions from others, as they find them ready made up by the voice of the generality, will have no need of such a wish to help them forward

in concluding, “ That the world is, and has been continually from the first notice we have of it, in a state of improvement, with regard to every thing, that can be thought to raise or dignify our nature ; and that consequently, it is now in all respects of that sort, better than it ever was before : ” to all such as these, a clear state of matter of fact and fair deduction from it, will, I make no doubt, evidently evince this truth.

But as the number of such men is very small, and as the contrary opinion, from the long possession it has had of their minds, may have left some ill impressions even on those, who are the best disposed to receive truth ; it may not, perhaps, be amiss, before we proceed to a more direct inquiry into this subject, to bestow a little time in tracing out those causes, which have given rise to the common notion, “ That virtue, and with it happiness, the arts, and in short, every thing which gives a grace and dignity to life, has long been upon the decline.”

CHAP. II.

In which some reasons are assigned, why men have been so generally of opinion, that the world has been growing worse, and their fallacy shewn.

ONE of the principal reasons for this opinion seems to have been the unfair comparison, which is usually made between present virtues and vices, and those which are past.

Do we not hear of more vices being practised now than formerly were, and fewer virtues? is a question, which almost every one is ready to ask: and from thence it is an easy step to the conclusion, "That consequently the manners of men are plainly in a state of degeneracy;" which, if need were, there is the authority of a * Poet ready at hand

* Who is now one of those venerable ancients, to whom such an universal homage is paid: who however, when he himself was a modern, did not seem much inclin'd to pay it to his predecessors; at least, if he gave up to them the point of virtue, he was by no means disposed to resign the praise of learning also; as we may see from those lines of his quoted at the beginning of this Essay, and others from the same place.

A new Estimate of
 hand to confirm, who thus complains of injurious time,

*Damnosa quid non imminuit dies?
 Ætas parentum, pejor avis, tulit
 Nos nequiores, mox datus
 Progeniem vitiosorem.*

If the world has been really making a continual progress to greater degrees of perfection, how is it possible, that men should so far overlook it's advances, as to think and say, it has been daily growing worse? In what light are we to look upon those improvements, which so far from becoming matter of common observation, have not been visible enough to prevent a conclusion, which intirely overthrows the very supposition of their existence?

This may pass with some for very plausible arguing; but it will be found, perhaps, on due inquiry, to have in fact no other foundation than this; we feel the ill effects of present vices, and therefore they excite in us strong emotions of indignation; whereas we can look at those, which are past, as unmoved, as we are unhurt by them.

Neither let any one think it a sufficient reply to this, to say, "That for the same

reason

reason we should estimate also at a higher rate present virtues, as we are in like manner immediately sensible of their good effects : " which if we did, it must be owned, we should still keep the balance fair and even. But unluckily, the *proposition which asserts, " That we are more strongly affected by what we see and feel, than by what we hear or read of, is only true in a partial respect ; " as we shall find by attending to the different process, which virtue and vice make in our affections.

Actions, that shock us, do indeed affect us more by happening in our own time, in our own country, and in our own neighbourhood, than when they happen at a distance : as we are by this means made acquainted with many little circumstances, that increase our horror, but yet are too trivial for history or relation to particularise, which generally give us things only in the gross. But it is not equally true, that those of a better kind affect us in the same manner. In the case of present vices we tremble for our friends,

* According to the same Poet,

*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
Quam quæ sunt oculis subiecta fidelibus —*

friends, our families, and ourselves : and as scarce any one thinks himself concerned to extenuate their heinous quality, except the actors of them, or their associates, for whom it is usually dangerous too, and always of little consequence to appear in the defence; they receive no alleviation, but such as time brings, which commonly blots out some of the worst circumstances attending them. People too, when the danger is over, begin with greater calmness to consider things, and make allowances ; till at length, crimes of the blackest hue lose their most frightful features, and appear with a softer aspect, and a fairer complexion.

The process is by no means the same with respect to good actions : as the former, when present, are more shocking ; so, in the same circumstances, the latter appear less striking. It has long ago been discovered, tho' not sufficiently attended to, “ That * virtue, instead of affording greater pleasure the nearer it comes to our view, has a strange kind of property to hurt the eye of the immediate beholder, and is scarce ever seen in it's full beauty and perfection, but through the medium

* *Virtutem incolumem odimus, &c. —*
Urit enim fulgore suo, &c.

dium of history : " this gives a shape and roundness to it, which on account of the blaze it occasions, present beholders cannot so well distinguish.

Envy too, and a thousand other circumstances, such as party-quarrels and family-connexions, step in between the living man of worth, and his due commendation ; but, when he is once gone ; has removed the hated obstacle, which stood in his rival's way to greatness ; to make him amends for their former niggardly and unwilling allowance of that honor, which his merits might have justly claimed, men are eager to heap even unmerited praises on his memory ; especially, as they are but too apt to hope, they shall by this means lessen the pretensions of those, who on the present stage are treading after him in the path of glory.

It is a cruel discouragement to the professors of virtue, the chief of whose rewards are placed at a distance, and are only to be come at through a road of difficulties ; that those which lie nearer, and should be given to animate them in their noble pursuits, are usually with-held, till they, who should receive them, are now become insensible of their worth. How much more reasonably

sonably should we act, how much more our interest, as well as duty, would it be, to bestow our praises on those, who are doing present credit, and present service to mankind, and who would be affected by them, than on those, who, however worthy they may have been, are long since lost to us, and to our praises too ? *

But as things are too frequently managed, the man who endeavours to excel, who would attain to any distinguished eminence, instead of the animating voice of praise, will hear many a mortifying reflexion ; instead of

any

* In this point of view how worthy of our regard and applause are they, who, by the appointment of premiums, or any other means, endeavour to excite a zeal for invention and improvement ? The Worshipful the Society of Antiquarians must pardon me, if I say, that such a spirit is much more beneficial to mankind, than that of some others amongst us, who have seemingly taken a vow not to like any thing that is modern ; but make it their constant business to shew, how much we are outdone in almost every thing by the ancients ; the scattered reliques of whose knowledge they are daily busy in collecting : and pay as much adoration to them, as certain devotees do to reliques of another sort. Not but that even these men might do the world good service, would they, as they ought, be content, like the workmen at Herculaneum, with merely digging up the remains of ancient art, or representing them fairly

any help to smooth the rugged passage, and render his arduous attempt the easier, will find many an ugly rub, purposely thrown in his way; and, instead of any friendly hand stretched out to save him from the danger of a false step, will feel many an adverse push from those who stand around him; and who, being incapable of getting higher themselves, do therefore purposely place as many obstacles, as they can, in the way of others; hoping, by such means, to keep them down, if possible, even below the level of that situation, to which they themselves have with diffi-

fairly to others; and not think it necessary to despise the best productions of the modern scholar, or artificer, in comparison with a parcel of rusty trifles, and impaired worm-eaten nonsense, which is in fact just so much the better for not being more intire. One would almost be inclined to think, that they had understood *Lucretius* literally, and believed

*duntaxat oriri
Posse ex non-sensu sensum,*

so much more pleasure do they seem to take in giving a meaning to what had none before, than in reading what is plain and intelligible. But it is generally too true, that

— *Saliare Numæ carmen qui laudat, et illud
Quod mecum ignorat, solus volt scire videri;
Ingeniis non ille favet plauditque sepultis,
Nostra sed impugnat, nos nostraque lividus odit.*

difficulty clambered up; or, at least, to prevent their gaining any height above them.

It must indeed be owned, that the best of characters contain some blemishes, which a too narrow scrutiny may discover. There is a distance, at which real life should be look'd at, as well as it's copy on the canvass: we should know before-hand, that there are imperfections in the one, as well as in the other, which will not bear too near or too curious an examination; and we should therefore make the same allowances to both. The misfortune is, we are aware we shall destroy our pleasure, if we do not place the painting in the most advantageous point of view we can; whereas, I am afraid, it constitutes a part of that pleasure, to view the real man in his worst proportions: and for this, without going to the utmost severity of criticism, the too great nearness of all living characters affords too much opportunity.

But the case is altered, when history has taken the honors of the dead under it's protection: this, in * proportion as it is written

* Whoever reads a history, which takes in a considerable length of time, and will attend to the manner of drawing characters used at the different periods of it, will see this exemplified in a thousand instances;

ten at a farther distance from the time when a great man lived, clears off more and more of that obloquy and detraction which sullied his living glory. Those spots, which seen

stances; he would see it in all, but that the historian has sometimes a private view, by saying more or less of an eminent man than he deserves, to favor some particular party or faction of his own times. All early accounts too (whether they relate to the world at large, or to the origin of particular kingdoms) being necessarily imperfect, and historians loving to give us things complete, the beginnings of almost all histories are but so many poetic fictions, calculated either to compliment that state which gave the Author birth, or to raise in us certain sublime notions of the grandeur and importance of human affairs, very different from what matter of fact would ever have suggested. This one of the most sensible antient historians expressly owns, “Quæ ante conditam “condendamve urbem, poeticis magis decora fa-“bulis, quam incorruptis rerum gestarum monu-“mentis traduntur, ea nec affirmare, nec refellere, “in animo est. Datur hæc venia antiquitati, ut mis-“cendo humana divinis, primordia urbium augus-“tiora faciat.” And with how favorable a prepos-
sessment to antient times he himself sets out, may be collected from these and other words in his preface; “Ego contra hoc quoque laboris præmium petam, “uti me a conspectu malorum, quæ nostra tot per “annos vidiæ ætas, transper certè dum prisca illa “*tota mente* repeto, avertam.” And yet what worse combination of human actions could even imagination form, than that, which seems, even from his own account, to have gone towards the first establish-
ment of Roman greatness?

seen too nearly, intercepted so much of his true brightness, in this new position gradually disappear; till at length, there is nothing left, but the fair and amiable picture of his virtue; which must always strike when viewed in it's true light: and if it has the farther good fortune to fall into a poet's hands, it is set off, and adorned with every grace, that may give it a superior lustre; with every stroke and touch of art, that may attract attention, or win admiration from all who see it.

It is from hence only, that we look for perfect characters in distant times and distant countries. — It is from hence only, that the illustrious heroes of our own time and country, admired and gazed at by all mankind beside; feared, and even honored by our enemies, are so long in gaining their just applause at home. — It is on this account, that the name of *George* or *William* does not raise in us an idea of so much greatness, as that of *Henry* or of *Edward* does; and even these great names themselves must, for the same reason, in their turn, yield to the superior sounds of *Scipio* and *Cæsar*.

C H A P. III.

Containing some other reasons to the same purpose.

TO the considerations, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, as likely to induce men to think worse of the present, and better of former times, than either might deserve; may be added the propensity, which there has ever been in old men, “to praise the times *passed, when they were young,*” and to prefer them to the present; the former of which may easily appear more agreeable to them, than the latter, without being so in fact; since the great difference is, most probably, only in themselves. They were then naturally disposed to think the best of every thing; their health and spirits gave a higher relish to their pleasures, which they had but few cares to interfere with; above attending to consequences, they enjoyed the present moment free from any impertinent interruption of thought and reflexion; ready to employ every idle hour (as the poet has it,) “With something new to wish, or to enjoy,” they would have little leisure, and still less inclination, to make any severe scrutiny into what might be amiss; indeed if they had

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both,

both, they must be extremely ill-qualified for the undertaking, having as yet had no opportunity for observation and comparison, which alone could enable them to form any true judgement.

It is well, if age and infirmities have not altered their disposition; it is well, if they be not now peevish and fretful; hard to be pleased; soon out of humor; rigid and severe in their censures; which to justify, they may be willing to have it thought, that such was the world in their time, it would have afforded no occasion for these complaints.

Or, to put the case more favorably for them, being now arrived to a nearer prospect of better pleasures, and having in a great measure lost those passions, which stamped a value upon inferior enjoyments; it is no wonder, if they now begin to despise these, which yet, they may remember, they once held in the highest estimation; and may therefore conclude, if they do not attend to what has passed within themselves in the mean time, that not they, but these are altered and abated in their worth. Which ever way it is, if we are at all influenced in forming our judgement by their authority, we shall in all probability, make a wrong one;

as they are so very liable to be prejudiced in their representations.

We may farther take into this same account the universal practice of the Poets, which has ever been uniform in favor of early times; the necessary simplicity, frugality, and temperance of which, have been the finest subjects imaginable for them to display their fancy upon, when they had a mind to paint the virtues of mankind, and give us the picture of a golden age: whereas, on the other hand, all their satyr has necessarily been always pointed at times present; which, otherwise, would lose it's edge and poignancy.

It is for this reason, that the writers, of Farce and Comedy only, present us with living characters; whereas the Tragedians, and Epic poets travel in search of their's into the remotest antiquity: for, it being the busines of the first to represent men, as they are, with a large mixture of imperfection always, and often of ridicule belonging to them; their end is best answered by giving us such descriptions, as are most suitable to what we daily see, and converse with. But the aim of the other being to represent men, as they neither do, nor ever did exist;

to give us certain complete patterns of virtue and perfection; they must needs endeavour to lay their scenes at as great a distance, as they can, that the improbability may not shock us too much by an immediate comparison; and the farther they get out of sight, for this reason, the better it is; for their characters being merely, or in a great measure, fictitious, if they did not throw them much into shade, the imposition would be too visible and glaring: being thus forced to have recourse to Antiquity, they have taken care amply to repay the assistance, they derived from it, by bestowing upon it in return the highest encomiums they could.

This however, we may observe, is as true of those we call Antients, as of the Moderns; for though *Aristophanes*, *Terence*, and *Moliere*, all present us with characters of the times, in which they wrote; yet *Sophocles* and *Euripides* no more describe the actions of living Heroes, than * *Shakespear* or *Corneille*.

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* Considered as a Tragedian.

And *Horace* was so convinced of the necessity of this practice, that, in his advice to the Tragedian, he lays it down for a rule,

Reetius Iliacum carmen deducis in Aetos,

Quam si proferres ignota indictaque primus.

That is, you had better take any ancient story for the subject of your play, than a modern event, which may

It may be worth notice here, in passing, that though all these authors describe characters of past ages, yet they must be supposed to have drawn their ideas of those virtues, which they deck them out with, from the age, in which they themselves lived. If this be true, how infinitely do the moderns excell

may be yet in a great measure unknown to the generality of mankind, and has received no established reputation by being chronicled in the sacred page of history or poetry;— and he gives this reason for it,

Difficile est propriè communia dicere. —

Which with the leave of Critics, who have given a different interpretation of it, I would construe thus, “it is difficult to give a propriety or dignity to occurrences of common life,” however distressful, which have not yet been singled out, and set up for men to gaze and wonder at.

This is farther confirmed by another direction which he gives his young author, prefaced in the following manner,

*Siquid inexpertum scenæ committis, et audes
Personam formare novam, &c.* —

in which he expresses as strongly, as he can, what a daring attempt it would be to form a new character: but what a dull business must the stage have become by this time, had nothing been represented there but tiresome repetitions of the *carmen Iliacum*; nothing but a lumber-headed *Ajax*, a bawling *Thersites*, or an *Achilles*, who must for ever have been just the same,

Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer!

cel the Ancients; through whose solemn scenes, there stalks a certain stubborn heroic kind of virtue, armed with a few principles of justice and moral rectitude, and attended by a set of stage decorums; but whose stern countenance banishes all those milder graces, that * affect the heart, that force the involuntary sigh, and teach the reluctant tear to flow?

* Neithet let any one imagine, that their not affecting us is owing to the language, in which they are wrote: let the most learned professor in those languages translate them into the best modern English, and the effect will still be the same.

As they do not affect us much in the reading, so is it difficult to imagine, how they could affect people much more, in the way, in which they were acted. They, who have seen some of our best actresses, and have attended to the inimitable expression in a *Garrick's* features, will hardly see, how these could be equalled in the old way of acting; where men played women's parts, and all the characters were performed in masks. Besides, the largeness of their theatres must have destroyed all the soft and delicate inflexions of the voice. Neither can one easily conceive, how their chanting and musical accompaniments could supply these defects. Indeed it is but a poor opinion one can entertain of their attainments in this art: from any thing I have ever read or heard either of their music, or musical instruments, I should conclude, that if all the music in this Island, musical instruments, and musicians too, were sent in cargos, like the Jesuits, to his holiness the Pope; excepting only Mr. *Parry* and his welch harp; we should have almost as much music

flow? These will in vain be sought for in the antient drama; where the tragedies have scarce any other marks of being such, but a few *ai ai*, Φευ Φευ's occasionally dispersed about in them; and the actors in general are merely a sect of unfeeling buskined philosophers; who deliver in a tedious unaffected kind of dialogue their imperfect maxims to be commented upon by the Chorus; † whose
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music left, as *Rome* or *Athens* ever knew. I am not ignorant of the surprising stories, which are told concerning the power of antient music. But at the same time I know, that those people are always most apt to be surprised, who are least acquainted with any matter. Nothing is so ready to stare and wonder itself, or endeavours so much to make others stare and wonder, as ignorance. Hence *Græcia mendax* had it's name, as much as for any other reason; and it is probable, that Egypt deserved the title still better.

I am aware, that this stricture upon old plays and the manner, in which they were acted, will lay me open to many censures; both for my want of taste, and want of reverence. But,

— *Clament* (which I would construe, “Let them cry out, as loud, as they please,”) *periisse pudorem*

*Cuncti pene patres; ea cum reprobendere coner
Quæ gravis Aësopus, quæ doctus Roscius egit!*

Since I know the reasons of the outcry would be only,

Vel quia nil rectum, nisi quod placuit sibi, ducunt;

Vel quia turpe putant parere minoribus, et quæ

Imberbi didicere, senes perdenda fateri.

† *Ille regit dictis animos et pectora mulcet.*

business it is to prevent either their being moved themselves, or moving you; for which indeed there generally seems but little occasion for them to exert much care.

The most pity-moving character of any I remember among them, is that of *Eleætra*; but compare that, as described by either of the * Poets, with the gentle *Elfrida*; and you will soon perceive, how far beyond what the antients ever knew, the moderns have carried all the milder virtues of humanity, that delicacy of sentiment, that tenderness of disposition, and soft complacency, which are the peculiar characteristics of a refinement in manners †.

Hi-

* *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*.

† However trifling or superficial this rule, of forming a judgement of the manners of a people from their entertainments, may seem to some, it is certainly much better, than any, which depends on history: for an historian may be partial, may palliate and excuse; but the poet, who writes for the stage, whose avowed end is to please the people, will undoubtedly in forming his characters, copy, or at least, pay a principal regard to the manners of that people: and if we find him introducing into his scenes a set of actions, which hurt rather than move us, we may be sure, the age he wrote in, was barbarous in some degree, whatever fine names an historian may have honoured it with; just as we certainly know a late age was grossly superstitious, from the number of ghosts and apparitions, introduced into all the plays that were then wrote.

Hitherto I have only mentioned the Tragedians, but the Epic poets also have availed themselves of the same advantage: nor can I in the least doubt, but that a great part of that universal homage, which is paid to *Homer*, *Virgil*, and *Milton*, is owing to the antiquity of their subjects. And if the last of the three has really excelled the other two, I suspect it is in nothing so much, as in having gone beyond them in this article.

If instead of *Man's first disobedience, &c.* *Milton* had sung of *Their first disobedience, who*, by a passionate struggle for liberty, had well-nigh brought about the slavery both of themselves and their posterity; (though a subject this of a most interesting nature to us of this kingdom, and one, with which he must have been most thoroughly acquainted,) he would have found it extremely difficult, with all his force of numbers, to have secured himself from being placed upon the same shelf with Prince *Arthur's* poet; and might perhaps have stood there, as little noticed.

Nay, the divine *Homer* himself, were he to come to life again, with the very same powers he had before; and attempt to sing the wars of *Germany* during the three last campaigns;

campaigns, with all the noble exploits of *Frederic* and *Ferdinand* for his materials, would never be able to produce a work of equal estimation with the *Iliad*,

— *Adeo sanctum vetus omne!* —

Though such a poultry business, as the taking of *Troy*, would not have been a work of ten days to one of our modern armies; in which the hero *Achilles* would not, without much instruction, have military skill enough to rank as a subaltern.

But ten long years of siege some thousand years ago, or a * war in heaven, (the very sound of which, by the way, almost staggers sober reason, without an absurd enumeration of particulars) sets admiration on the wide gape, and with that on his side, let the poet raise what monsters he will, they all go glibly down,

Scyllamque Antiphatemque, et cum Cyclope Charybdin. —

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* It would be extremely difficult to determine, whether the Deities of the Heathen poet, or the Angels of the Christian, make the best warriors; though the latter have one manifest advantage over the former; I mean that of gunpowder, and a large train of artillery. —

Surely a Christian Poet could never have fallen into such an absurdity, had it not been through a studious imitation of the Heathen!

It is amazing to think, what outrageous nonsense we are reconciled to, by this single charm of antiquity. All the trumpery of idle fables, and old stories, which nothing, but being old, could secure from being laughed at, is, when dressed in this venerable garb, received with the most profound deference, and sanctimonious regard.*

Next to the poets may be reckoned, as auxiliaries in the same cause, the whole body of declaimers, of what denomination soever; from the public orator down to the private murmur and complainer about debts and taxes; from him, who pours forth his eloquence in the senate or the pulpit, to him, who,

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* Of this *Virgil* seems to have been well aware, when, intending to describe some religious rites of his countrymen, things of a ticklish nature to meddle with, he thought proper (if we may credit the ingenious interpretation of the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, given us by the learned author of *The Divine Legation of Moses*) to mask his intention, not only for greater security, but also for greater dignity, under the hallowed covering of a descent into the regions below.

One trembles to think, how many marks of resemblance, to how many venerable assemblies, an ingenious critic, by the application of this rule, may hereafter discover in *Milton's Pandæmonium!* who can say, that the poet in this, had not an eye to the famous meeting of Divines at *Westminster*?

in an humbler sphere, contents himself with haranguing the political circle of a coffee-house, or a neigbouring club; who have all made it their business to speak as ill as possible of times present; having, perhaps, for their encouragement, found it to be true, that the poignancy of satyr was better suited to the common palates of mankind, than the insipid flatness of panegyric; and that we like, in general, much better to be frightened and abused, than even to be praised and flattered.

As many however of this class betray such an unreasonable malignancy in their censures, one is almost ready to conclude, that they were born with a natural indisposition to be pleased.

Many more of them through prejudice, disappointment, or education, seem to have acquired a certain habit of seeing things in a wrong light, and representing them so to others.

And if to these we add the number of such, as without any kind of conviction, or even examination at all about the matter, fall into trite common-place harangues against the vices of the times; merely because it has been long the practice so to do,

and it is become easy therefore to go on in the beaten track; we shall not leave many behind, who deserve our notice.

There is indeed one sort of them, who are of much better quality, than any of the above described; whose account of things, though given with a much better intention, is yet as far from being true, as any of the others. I mean those zealously good men, who purposely describe the wickedness of mankind in as black colors, as they can, to make them start, if possible, at the frightful picture; and who, in order to awaken their hearers to a vigorous prosecution of virtuous measures, endeavor to alarm them thoroughly, with the greatness of their danger in a contrary course: to do which more effectually, they are sometimes tempted to step aside from the exact limits of truth, and borrow a striking feature of vice from the regions of fancy.

Whether, or no, their success has been equal to their honest intention, is no part of our inquiry: but admitting their own account of things to be true, it seems, as if it had not; for they successively go on to describe the times, as growing worse and worse, notwithstanding their most earnest endeavours to the contrary.

I do not mean, that therefore sin should be flattered; or that a wicked age should have nothing, but “smooth things prophesied unto it:” though considering how ill the contrary method has succeeded, it might not perhaps be amiss to try, what giving men a more comfortable prospect would do: we always press forward with greater eagerness; and there is a certain uphill kind of labor in attaining to heights, from whence we are supposed to have fallen, which must needs move slowly on. But there is undoubtedly sufficient reason, for the friends of virtue at all times to aim at inspiring men with a lively sense of their duty, and not to neglect any method, which may answer that good end.

All therefore, which I would be understood to mean by what I have said above, is no more than this, that the character of an age ought not to be taken strictly from such interested accounts, as these; where there is some other end to be answered, besides the mere discovery of truth.

To the causes already assigned, as likely to give rise to the common mistake, (and which are swelled, I am afraid, to a tedious number,) I will add but this one more, *the natural inclination of all mankind, to ascribe*

cribe their unhappiness to any thing whatever, rather than to themselves: if we reflect then, how uneasy they are for ever making themselves in their present circumstances, be they what they will, by their follies and their vices; and yet how willing they are to remove the blame of this from their own doors; we need not be surprised, if we find them all fond of attributing the uneasiness they suffer, more to the natural badness of the times, in which they live, than to reasons, which might throw a reflection on their own conduct.

And from all these considerations, taken together, we may surely discover abundant room, whenever it first happened, for the opinion to obtain, "that present times fell far short of the excellency of former days." And when once an error has got ground, it not only grows of itself, without either culture or care; but it requires much both of time and pains to root it out.

Having thus traced out the sources, from which men have probably derived their common notion, that the world has been growing worse and worse continually; it may be almost argument enough to shew it's falsehood, just to observe, that had it been true,

true, there must have been an end of the world, and it's wickedness too, before this time: it is such a downhill road to ruin and perdition, that had men entered upon it; had they begun to decline in virtue and perfection, so early and so fast, as these complaints would make them; they must long e'er this have reached the lowest pitch of degeneracy; and the bands by which society is held together, had been all long ago loosened and destroyed.

C H A P.

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C H A P. IV.

Of the evil tendency of this opinion, and the mischief they do, who encourage it.

THIS opinion however is not only false, but like most others, which are so, it is of a most pernicious tendency to civil peace and social happiness: and they, who encourage it, cannot well do a worse office to mankind.

This is no piece of refined modern policy, but was long ago discovered by a great king and moral teacher; who has left us the following maxim; “Say not thou, what is the cause, that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.” Which words I shall beg leave to consider as a text to preach upon to the end of this chapter.*

The meaning then of this maxim may, first of all, be construed thus, “Do not set about inquiring into the cause of a thing, which is not in itself true in fact.” This would be to inquire unwisely indeed!

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* I thought proper to declare this, that those of my readers, whose stomachs are too weak to bear anything in the sermon way, may pass it over.

We might, notwithstanding, be thought perhaps to extend this meaning to such a length, as however suitable it might be to our purpose, would scarce be agreeable to that wisdom, for which the author of the precept was so highly and so justly celebrated, if we should infer from it, that he intended absolutely to prohibit all inquiry into this subject whatever, which should be on the unfavorable side:— because, if we are really convinced, that our present circumstances fall far short of the excellency of former times; (a case which may happen to a particular place, whilst at the same time the general plan of improvement is still carrying on in the world at large;) we surely not only may, but in prudence should, endeavour to trace out the cause, from whence that former superiority arose; by which means we might perhaps both see, how we had gone off from that good principle; and also be enabled to find out a method of returning into the right way again.

If then it be allowed, that the maxim is not so strictly prohibitory; it might in the next place be made matter of dispute, whether it was meant, as a piece of instruction to those, who should hereafter direct their inquiries

this way, to use the utmost caution and prudence ; or, as a reproof to those, who had already conducted themselves in this business by other principles ; who had shewn an unreasonable dissatisfaction at the present order of things, and from thence had proceeded to hasty and petulant conclusions against it.

And farther, if we even confine the precept to the last mentioned sense ; it may still be doubted, whether it was levelled only at the common discontentedness of mankind in general ; or was pointed more immediately at some particular * person ; who might be famous, in *Solomon's* days, for having instituted a comparison between those and former times, in favor of the latter.

But however doubtful these points may be, it is clear beyond all doubt, that this wise man intended to discourage all such inquiries,

* I would beg leave to observe, that it is no proof of the absurdity of this supposition ; that we, at this distance of time, know nothing more concerning the existence of any such person ; because it is much to be questioned, whether, at the same distance of time from the present, with all the advantages, which modern authors have from the invention of printing, it will not be to the full as uncertain, that ever *we* had such an author amongst *us*.

quiries, as could answer no other end, but to furnish fresh matter of complaint to peevish and froward minds ; and increase the dissatisfaction, which men are apt enough of themselves to conceive against the conditions, in which they are placed : if he farther designed what he says, as a stricture upon some particular Censor of the times, it certainly was, because he knew him to be one of this turn ; one, who *did not inquire wisely concerning this* ; but had taken up his facts, perhaps, on slight evidence, and had been guided, even in his reasoning upon these facts, more by caprice than judgement ;— in short, one, who had shewn his abilities to declame and rail at what every one, as well as himself, could see was amiss, rather than any penetration into the cause, from whence the evil sprung ; or skill in prescribing a remedy, by which it might be cured.

And whenever a person sets about such inquiries as these, merely out of disgust at some present disappointment, or to satisfy a spleenetic disposition, which is ever fond of finding fault ; when, in consequence of this, his representations are plainly drawn, more from ill temper, or a desire to lash and expose the age, than a sober inclination to reform it ;

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when he shews manifest symptoms of virulence, pique, and resentment, things intirely inconsistent with the character of a candid inquirer ; when he betrays either passion or pride, things utterly unbecoming a moral reformer ; — the reproof of *Solomon* is still justly applicable to him, “ Say not *thou*, what is the cause that the former days were better than these ? for *thou* dost not inquire wisely concerning this”. The most favorable construction, that can be put upon such a man’s attempts to depreciate the times, in which he lives, (especially, if he takes the advantage of any disheartening circumstances to spread his poison more successfully;) is, that he is endeavouring to purchase an opinion of his own superior discernment, even at the expence of his honesty ;* is charitably undertaking to undeceive others, who by some mistake are happy ; and is trying, as much as in him lies, to diffuse that chagrin and ill humor, which mark his own gloomy brow, into minds of a better turn, and more cheerful

* For, as the author of the late *Estimate* well expresses it, “ To rail at the times at large, can serve no good purpose ; and generally ariseth from a want of knowledge, or a want of honesty.” *Estimate*, p. 15.

ful disposition ; by which means, if he is of consequence enough to be attended to, (and indeed, what is there, that bodes ill to mankind, but is thought of consequence enough to be attended to ? *) he does infinite mischief to the community, of which he is a member; the stability and happiness of which consist in nothing so much, as in being thought well of by those, who compose it.

* “ Vice impatiently drinks in, and *applauds* his hoarse and boding voice, while like a *Raven*, he sits croaking universal death, *despair*, and annihilation to the human kind.” *Estimate*, p. 169.

C H A P. V.

In which some other opinions are considered.

BESIDES the opinion, already taken notice of, there are some others, which may seem to stand in our way ; and which therefore it may be proper to remove, before we attempt to proceed any farther.

To avoid then, in part, the absurdity of supposing things to have been continually growing worse and worse, some may fancy, that the world, like a day,* as it has had it's morning, must also have it's evening : they may allow, that, for a time, it must have been improving ; that the dawn could not pretend to vie with that blaze and splendor, which should mark the mid-day height ; but, this being once over, things would be upon the decline again ; till they were lost in endless night.

Now, admitting this to be possible, will they say this imaginary *vertex* is already past ? if it be, where must we look to find the æra, when that most singular event happened ?

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* The course of human affairs, having begun in the east, and travelled westward, may be thought to give some countenance to this opinion.

Was it at *Babylon*, or *Memphis*; at *Athens*, or at *Rome*, that worldly greatness attained this fancied summit of perfection?—If it be not past already, which the loss men are at to point out clearly the time, when it happened, shews sufficiently it is not; there is every appearance to prove, that the world is not yet near it, though nearer now, than ever it was before; and there is all the reason, which analogy can afford, to assure us, that it will never pass it; but will go on, from one degree of advancement to another, till it has reached the highest point, for which it was designed; when it will yield up its inhabitants to other worlds, and greater bliss, than it could give them.*

Others,

* It might appear a whimsical conjecture, to suppose, that in our future existence we may possibly pass through all the different planets, both in this and other solar systems: yet, if we are to have bodies hereafter, and a local habitation, this might perhaps be made as plausible an hypothesis, as many others, which have carried their heads full high in the literary world. What our Saviour says, “That in his Father’s house are many mansions”, might with as little force be brought to confirm this, as many other texts of Scripture have been dragged from their original meaning to give evidence for some theological whimsy. And, if we look into the internal constitution of this great globe itself, which we inha-

bit,

Others, however seem to have thought, there was a certain + equality in human affairs, above or below which they never rose much higher, or sunk much lower ; but that all sublunary things, as if under the more immediate influence of that planet, from whence they have their name, were actuated by a kind of tide ; which, by turns, would occasion a flow, as it were, in some places, and an ebb

bit, we shall see many appearances, which might lead us to imagine, that it was a place of abode for other animals, before it was fitted up for our reception.

On some such supposition, as the above, the Poet's Hell seems to have been built ;

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where, &c.

*The dilated Spirit
To bathe in fiery floods ; or to reside
In tbrilling regions of tbick-ribbed ice !*

+ To this opinion may possibly be referred the adage of *Solomon*, “ That there is nothing new under the Sun ; But the thing that hath been, it is “ that which shall be, and that which is done, is that “ which shall be done, &c”. — And likewise what *Sophocles* says in his *Ajax* ;

Ατανθ' ὁ μακρος καναριθμοὶ χρονοὶ^ς
Φυει τ' αδηλα καὶ Φανεντα κρυπτεῖται. —

There is a passage too in *Tacitus* to the same purpose ;

“ Nisi forte rebus cunctis ineſt quidam velut *orbis*, ut quemadmodum temporum vices, ita morum vertantur.”

ebb in others; each of which would be followed again by it's respective ebb and flow, in regular succession.

And, in fact, something very like this has happened in the world. States and Empires have had their rise and fall; different places, at different times, have been the envied seats of learning, power, and greatness; and, in their turns again, have become the contemptible residence of ignorance, slavery, and meanness. Temples, Porticos, and Towers, the palaces of Princes, and the schools of Philosophers, have, in this strange revolution, been basely converted into huts for peasants, and stalls for their cattle!

These great and numerous instances of the injurious effects of time, we may, we must lament; the very dread of what may hereafter happen to our own loved country, will enforce a feeling, and compassionate regard for these vast overthrows of former magnificence: and yet perhaps, they were the necessary means of bringing *us* to that towering height of fortune, to which we are now raised. Providence might act in this case, as we see the skilful husbandman do; who, when he has had as many crops from one field, as the soil will yield, which now

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by frequent tilling is worn out, turns his attention to some other spot; and breaks up fresher ground, in hopes of larger increase, and a more ample return for his labor.

But however this may be, certain it is, that though deluges and earthquakes, the ravages of fire and sword, with other the eventful strokes of time, have delayed the progress of human things toward perfection, they have not intirely prevented it; earthly greatness, like the earth-born Giant, seems to have recovered fresh strength every time it has been thrown to the ground; and even after that long period, in which arts and sciences laid as it were dormant, they have awaked, as if refreshed by this sleep, with new vigor.

Indeed from the most thorough wrecks of time, there has always something escaped; if not as much, as we might wish, at least enough to enable succeeding ages to set out on their inquiries, with greater advantage, than *they* could possibly have, *who* had every thing to invent anew: even a boat, or plank properly shaped, escaping, would easily furnish ideas to future projectors, which probably cost the first inventor many a painful research.

And

And even from this seeming objection, I think, one might draw an almost undenialable argument in favor of modern improvements: since these destructions, which happened to former arts and learning, might be accounted for from natural causes; for, when all the learning of mankind was in one empire, in one country, and perhaps in one city, it might be easy for such an event to happen, as would almost intirely destroy it. But in the diffused state, which learning and arts are in at present, under the care and protection of several different governments, who are all jealous of maintaining their respective share; it must be the hand of God alone, raised to inflict a general punishment for our sins, that could bring about any thing like what happened before on events merely natural.

But if this be the case; if it be really true, that we are now in possession of greater advantages, than God ever gave to men before; what should the consequence be on our part, but greater degrees of virtue to deserve, and of diligence to improve them!

A NEW
ESTIMATE
OF
MANNERS and PRINCIPLES.

PART II.

Of the Knowledge of Mankind.

Alius error est, suspicio quædam et diffidentia, quæ nihil nunc posse inveniri autumat, quo mundus tamdiu carere potuit; ac si illa objectio conveniret erga tempus, quā Lucianus impetit Jovem, cæterosque ethnicorum Deos: "Miratur enim, cur tot olim genuerint liberos, nullos autem suo sæculo? interrogatque jocans, ecquid septuagenarii jam essent, aut lege Pappiā contra senum nuptias constrieti?" sic videntur homines subvereri, ne tempus effætum jam factum sit et ad generationem ineptum. Lord BACON.

*But for myself, (says the great Sir WALTER RALEIGH)
I shall never be persuaded, that God hath shut up all the light of Learning within the Lanthorn of Aristotle's brains; or, that it was ever said unto him, as unto Esdras, Accendam in corde tuo Lucernam intellectus; That God hath given invention but to the Heathen, and that they only invaded Nature, and found the strength and bottom thereof; the same Nature having consumed all her store, and left nothing of price to after-ages.*

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TO THE
S O C I E T Y

FOR ENCOURAGING

Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce,

This SECOND PART

Treating of ARTS and SCIENCES,

IS

Humbly offered,

As a mark of the Author's great respect.

*Nec omnia apud priores meliora,
sed nostra quoque ætas multa Laudis et Artium,
imitanda posteris reliquit. TACIT.*

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PART II.

Of the Knowledge of Mankind.

C H A P. I.

A general view of what is proposed in the second part.

HAVING attempted to remove some objections which seemed to stand in my way, and threatened to oppose my conclusion, I shall now undertake a more direct proof of the proposition, which I laid down in the first part; namely, "That all ages and countries taken collectively, the world is, and has been from the earliest notice we have of it, in a state of general improvement"; or, which is nearly the same thing in other words, "That mankind at present is *wiser, happier, and better* than it ever was before."

This, it must be owned, is a wide and open field, and the paths across it are but faintly marked ; the herd has gone another way ; people hitherto have paid such a deference to venerable antiquity, as to imagine,

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that the longer ago men lived, they were for that reason, and in that proportion, wiser and better; having seemingly made this mistake amongst others, that by hearing the terms, *ancient* and *old*, applied to former times, they have really been led to suppose the world older, and therefore wiser heretofore, than it is now: whereas in fact, those* early times were the youthful days of the world; which is now, if not in it's old age, at least in a much more advanced stage, than it was then; and consequently has a stronger claim to that wisdom, which greater age gives, than ever it had before.

With this appearance then on my side, especially as knowledge seems to be the grand principle, on which all other improvements depend, I will begin with endeavoring to shew, that men are wiser now, than they formerly were; or, that *science* and the *arts of life* are at present in a state of much higher perfection, than they ever were, at any former period.

* Sane, ut verum dicamus, *Antiquitas sæculi juventus mundi*. Nostra profecto sunt antiqua tempora, cum mundus jam senuerit, non ea quæ computantur ordine retrogrado initium sumendo a sæculo nostro. *Lord Bacon.*

It can hardly be necessary, one should think, to explain, what one means by such common terms, as *science* and the *arts of life*: lest however any mistake should be made; I mean, by *science*, all that knowledge, which mankind are possessed of, by what means soever acquired, or of whatever sort it be; and, by the *arts of life*, I understand the practical production of science into use, comprehending all those various inventions, which contribute, in any degree, to supply men either with necessaries, conveniences, elegancies, or even amusements.

To be accurate, one should perhaps make these two the subjects of two distinct considerations; it being possible, that the arts of life may flourish in some degree, where science languishes; as luxury, which is evidently a friend to the one, may be thought by some an enemy to the other; so that the same conclusion might not be just, when extended to them both indiscriminately: but they have generally grown up together in such close connexion, that there is little room left for the suspicion of their ever being parted; and therefore it seems needless to consider them asunder: besides, much accuracy is not to be expected in

such a loose way of estimating things, as I am pursuing; in which I aim at nothing more, than just to touch upon the surface of such matters, as lie open to view, and seem to invite the eye; while I leave it to the more discerning and judicious to pry, with more exactness, into less obvious distinctions.

C H A P. II.

A proof, that Arts and Sciences must have been improving, drawn from the nature of the thing.

THAT arts and sciences have been, upon the whole, in an improving state, from the beginning of the world to this time, is, strictly, to be proved only by the authority of history, or matter of fact, as it stands related there. Yet such a degree of probability arises from the very nature of the thing, as may make it seem unnecessary to attempt a direct and formal proof.

For if, as sacred history informs us, mankind derived it's being from two original parents; how necessarily must these two, ignorant and unskilled at first, unless they were to live by mere instinct only, make daily advances in some new discoveries, either of what was needful, or convenient for them! allowing them to have received, from their Maker, some* slight information about

* Some of the learned (as *Heidegger* and *Delany*) have taken a great deal of pains, to shew, that *Adam* had very numerous revelations made to him: I do not mean at all to interfere with their studious labors; but allowing him to have received all the information, they pretend he did, if he was made a rational creature, all, that I can contend for, will be equally true.

bout what was fit for them to eat, what they should do, or what avoid; would their own experience, think ye, make no addition to these first impressions, this so scanty fund of knowledge? would not they find towards the close of life, that they knew much more, than they did at the beginning of it? would they not perceive, that had they known things at first, as well as they did then, they could have got through life more comfortably, than they had done? and would not they treasure up these documents of experience, as useful lessons to their children? These questions are so very clear, that they contain their answers. Their children then, even supposing them not to make all the use of instruction, which they might, would certainly, by this means, set out in the world with much greater advantages, than their parents had done: and in a succession of generations, supposing the natural abilities of mankind to be the same, this must continue for ever to be the case.

I do not mean, by this, to encourage every raw and unfledged upstart, with an overweening opinion of his own towering genius, to think himself wiser than his teachers; or of more understanding than the

aged. It is, no doubt, a mark of duty to believe our parents and instructors wiser, than ourselves; (which, if the principles laid down above be true, they must be;) and it would be well, if we would listen to their wisdom more, than we usually do. But surely to suppose, that, with all our health and strength about us, we can go no farther, than their kindness has conducted us, can be the sign of nothing, but mere sloth or shallow conceit.

Yet this fondness, either for staying where we are, or at least, going on only in the *old way; or the same notion in other words, an over-readiness to fancy it impossible to carry the land-marks of

know-

* Certe consilium Prophetæ vera in hac re norma est, “State super *vias antiquas*, et videte quænam sit via recta et bona, & ambulate in eâ.” Antiquitas eam meretur reverentiam, ut homines aliquamdiu gradum fistere, et supra eam stare debeant, atque undequaque circumspicere, quæ sit via optima: quum autem de viâ bene consiterit, tunc demum non restitendum, sed alacriter progredendum. *Lord Bacon de Aug. Scient.*

But surely, if we can perceive none of the old ways to be right and good, or that are likely to lead us to a conclusion of our present purpose; we are at liberty to choose one of our own; or we can never arrive at any new discovery.

knowledge farther, than where our fathers had fixed them, aided by the absurd ridicule, which is usually thrown upon all new attempts by those self-satisfied men, who are laudably determined to take things, as they find them; has been one grand hinderance, that has occasioned the slow movement of human inventions towards perfection.*

But leaving this reflexion, let us suppose mankind to be now so far increased by degrees, as to have become, at first, too numerous for one family; and afterwards, for one country to contain. Necessity, in this case, would oblige the too populous commonweal to discharge itself of a part of it's cumbrous weight, and to send away some of it's superfluous inhabitants; who must go in search

of

* *Sapientiam sibi admunt, qui sine ullo judicio inventa majorum probant, & ab aliis pecudum more ducuntur.* *Laet.* de Orig. Erroris. l. 2. c. 8.
“By the advantage of which sloth and dulness, (as Sir *Walter Raleigh* quaintly, but strongly, expresses it) ignorance is now become so powerful a tyrant, as it hath set true Philosophy, Physic and Divinity in a pillory; and written over the first, **CONTRA NEGANTEM PRINCPIA**; over the second, **VIRTUS SPECIFICA**; and over the third, **ECCLESIA ROMANA.**”

of new habitations; in places, which before were uninhabited; in climates too, which differed much, from that they left, in soil, fruits, and temperature. These new adventurers then, to make their subsistence easy and comfortable, must, besides the principles they brought from home with them, set themselves with all diligence, to find out and learn many other things, both useful and necessary to be known. And this again would give rise to several new and valuable discoveries.*

If we suppose, lastly, these separate communities to be arrived at the highest degree of perfection, which, independently of each other, they were capable of attaining; how vastly would they all be improved by a mutual intercourse with each other; and that in proportion to the ease, and frequency of this intercourse? what a number of things would be found in use among one people, that had never been thought of by the others; which yet might be introduced into their practice, with the greatest success?

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* According to the old prophecy, "Men shall go to and fro' upon the earth, and knowledge shall be increased."

Whoever considers, how much the art of navigation, the grand means of conveyance from one country to another, has lately been improved by the invention of the compass; and in consequence of this, how much commerce has been extended; (whose interest it is to be acquainted, as much as possible, with the ways and manners of different people, whose business it is to supply the wants of one nation with the superfluities of another, nay, whose study it is even to make superfluities;) will easily see and allow, how much the advantages, which modern times have derived from this intercourse, must exceed any, which could be obtained from it heretofore.

If any one thinks, that sciences have not reaped the same benefit by this means, which arts have; — it must be merely, because he looks upon science to be built on different foundations, from those of nature and experience; for otherwise, the improvements of them both must have been nearly equal.

CHAP. III.

The same proposition proved from a consideration of the places, where Arts have flourished.

THE East, however well suited it was for the first race of mankind to make their appearance in, (as by it's genial warmth there would be a kind of spontaneous production of fruits for their subsistence;) or however well it might be calculated for the speedy dispersion of mankind, (as it consisted chiefly of fruitful vales too narrow for an increasing multitude to dwell in, and disjoined from each other by large, extensive deserts;) it must be, for the same reasons, ill adapted to any considerable improvements. The same heat, which was favorable to the fruits of the earth, would be extremely injurious to the strength of the body, which would become languid and averse to labor, the chief sinew of all art and industry. That large extent of continent too, with such vast deserts in it, would render all trade and commerce extremely hazardous, and inconvenient; by which means, the arts would be deprived of their principal support and encouragement.

Greece

Greece and *Italy* partook, in some respects, though in a less degree, of the inconveniences of the East; and therefore, though their advancements in art were carried, considerably beyond the narrow bounds of their eastern predecessors; they must fall far short of what we, their more western, or rather more northern successors, have arrived at. The distinction which * *Tully* makes between the *Ligurians* and those of *Campania*, holds good, in some degree, between the *Italians* in general, and us of this island. They, born under a better sun, had little incitement to improvements, except from luxury or pleasure; which will never furnish such a goading spur to industry, as want can do: we, though we cannot, with reason, complain of nature's sparingness towards us, are placed in such a situation, as makes it necessary to earn her

favors

* Speaking of the effect, which places have upon the manners of their inhabitants, he has the following words: “ *Non ingenerantur hominibus mores tam a stripe generis, ac feminis, quam ex iis rebus, quæ ab ipsâ naturâ loci, et vitæ consuetudine suppeditantur &c.* *Ligures*, montani, duri atque agrestes. *Docuit ager ipse nihil ferendo, nisi multâ cultura, et magno labore quæsitus.* *Campani*, semper superbi bonitate agrorum, et magnitudine fructuum, urbis salubritate, descriptione, pulchritudine. — *Ex hac copia — arrogantia et luxuries.* ” *De Leg. Agrar.*

favors, by a studious application of our own endeavors.

And, if there be * any truth in the old proverb, "That necessity is the mother of invention," the most numerous productions of art, are always to be expected in those places, where the defects of nature are the greatest. † The stroller's motto, "vivitur ingenio," can never be so true, as where men must live by their wits, to live at all. In short, what could make a *Dutchman* ingenious but necessity, and what but ingenuity could make such a marsh, as they live in, not only a habitable country; but one, which a few years ago, could

* The number of my brother Authors, the respectable inhabitants of Grub-street, who write plainly from necessity, and yet shew no great marks of invention; may incline some perhaps to think, that the proverb is not true in every instance. And though I profess not to write through necessity, yet it may be well, if I myself escape censure here.

† It will be found too to be in general true, that, where arts are most numerous, (such is the friendly assistance which they mutually lend each other!) there also they will be in the greatest perfection; some few particulars only excepted, which owe the excellence they are brought to, to some extraordinary circumstance, such as embalming amongst the *Egyptians*, shooting with bows and arrows amongst the *Indians*, &c.

However, though necessity be the strongest motive to put men upon the first trials of their skill, yet this end is soon satisfied; and the arts require a better pay-master, and much higher encouragement, than it can give, to shew themselves in any great degree of perfection. It will follow from hence, that of all places arts must flourish most in those, where nature has been rather sparing in her choicest gifts; and yet the genius and riches of the inhabitants incline them much to luxury and pleasure.

If the situation of such a place should, moreover, afford opportunity for an extensive commerce; and the quantity of what are called staple commodities should farther make this commerce an advantageous one; (so that even in acquiring elegancies men acquire fresh opulence, the means of getting more;) here it is, that arts must naturally attain to the highest summit of improvement.

CHAP. IV.

Of the evidence which history gives to the above particulars.

TO the above, which may be called natural arguments in favor of modern excellency, the testimony of all history, if we follow it's guidance through the different places, where the most eminent of mankind have had successively their abode, will perfectly agree.

I am not going to collect materials for a history of arts and sciences; (though it were much to be wished, that such a work was undertaken by an able hand!) but perhaps the following general sketch, in which no more is attempted, than barely to mark a few outlines, may be thought no unfair representation of the antient state of things.

In the East, where the dawn first arose, men lived, as it were, under a sort of twilight; which partook in a great degree of that darkness, which had preceded it. Their knowledge must have been as imperfect, as the accounts we have of it can be supposed to be: according to these, it consisted chiefly of a few moral analogues, where the shadow was

was much larger, than the substance; a set of loose scattered maxims of life; and some accidental discoveries in the properties of plants and herbs: These, together with a very small number of trifling observations on the heavens, constituting a short rude system of astronomy, or rather astrology, which aided, and in it's turn was aided by, their superstition, seem to make the sum, if such is to be called knowledge, of what the eastern sages knew.

Their religion was such, as their pastoral life might easily be supposed to throw in their way; by their frequent contemplations on the heavens they might be led first to admire and wonder at, and from thence to revere and worship, what they saw most striking there, the sun, the moon, and the stars; which they might also perceive were of much benefit to them, by affording light and heat. And they were probably directed in the choice of what they should offer to these objects of their worship, either to gain their favor, or avert their anger, by reflecting on what would be most agreeable to themselves, in the same circumstances.

Their civil government was plainly suited only to keep in awe beasts of prey; such as

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mankind could never have submitted to, but through ignorance, or necessity. Whether parental authority stepped into the seat of empire, and arrogated to itself supreme command; or whether the fears of the herd led them to seek protection under the conduct of some one of greater strength, or cunning than the rest, might perhaps be difficult to determine. But certain it is, the first specimens of human government do little credit to their origin: there was the most abject slavery on the one hand, and the most absolute tyranny on the other, that imagination can well form.

The luxury of the eastern emperors, as they became great, it must be owned, gave considerable encouragement for the arts to shew themselves; but they were hindered from attaining to any great degree of perfection by the narrowness of their commerce; which extending no farther, than to countries of nearly the same produce with their own, and confined to a few articles, such as corn, gems, and spicery, afforded small variety for genius to exercise itself upon.

It must be observed here, that I except out of my account God's peculiar people, the people of *Israel*, together with the religion,

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statutes, and ordinances, which he gave them; these being of divine institution, are not subject to those general laws, by which the common course of things is regulated.

Egypt too and it's learning, is a subject, which I would willingly pass over, not as fearing, it will make against me; but, (if it may be consistent with the dignity of an author to own himself ignorant of any thing, that falls in his way,) because I really know very little of the matter. Happy in what they possessed, like the modern *Chinese*, they seem to have been little solicitous about getting any thing, their neighbours had; but extremely so in preventing others from having any intercourse at all with them. Hence the Difficulty of saying, what they knew, or did not know. If any one however has a desire of being better acquainted with them, he need only read the *Divine Legation of Moses*; the author of which incomparable performance is, like the person he treats of, *learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*; to such a degree, that he can tell us exactly the time and occasion, when they first began to write *running hand*!

In the mean time it seems clear to me, that their affectation of so much mystery,

and secrecy, was but, in general, a cover for their ignorance. True knowledge deals not in mystery, nor does it seek to be hid. Their deifying too the authors of useful discoveries shews sufficiently, that things were near their beginning amongst them. If, besides this, it be true, that *Grecian* learning was built upon their's; we may well conclude, that the foundation was not higher, than the edifice.*

If we pass from hence into *Greece*; we shall find, that they gave a shape and coloring to those outlines of knowledge, which their eastern predecessors had left them: to those rude and uncouth forms of letters, which they received from them, they added substance and sinews, and formed a smooth and most harmonious language; with which they wrought wonders in the provinces of poetry and eloquence, pushed on, as they were, by

* Primi per figuræ animalium Ægyptii sensus mentis effingebant; et antiquissima monimenta humanæ memoriae impressa faxis cernuntur; et literarum semet inventores perhibent. Inde Phœnicas, quia mari præpollebant, intulisse Græciæ, gloriampque adeptos; tanquam repererint quæ acceperant. Quippe fama est Cadmum classe Phœnicum vestum, rudibus adhuc Græcorum populis artis ejusuctorem fuisse, &c. TACIT. Annal.

by the hopes of living in the memories of mankind after death; the only species of immortality, of which they had any steady apprehension.

The loose and unconnected maxims of former wisdom, they wrought into fine systems of physics, ethics, and politics. They refined their manners and extended their commerce; which however, like their ships, durst not venture, even yet, far from the shores, or launch into the deep.

But though other things, and morality amongst the rest, received considerable improvements here; yet religion still lay in the same imperfect state, it had been in, with only this addition, that the catalogue of deities was enlarged; every virtue and every vice having been taken into the list of gods, and godesses. Which practice is however not so absurd, as it sounds. The men could arrive at just notions of the unity, omnipotence, and omnipresence, of the true God; what properer method could be thought of to keep them in awe, than to inspire them with a belief, that there was a particular Deity, who presided over every thing, they had to do with; over every action, thought, and motion of their will.

to whom such or such behaviour would either be agreeable, or odious ?

But whatever the improvements of *Greece* were, their knowledge was drawn more from the schools, than common life ; and consequently was much better fitted for disputes in the one, than for use in the other ; was in short much more suited to the concealment of error, than the discovery of truth. The effect, it has had, has been accordingly, just such, as might be expected. Whilst men were content to follow each other in the same narrow path, they neither did, nor could, make any new discoveries : all they could do, was merely to wrangle and dispute, by dint of syllogism, in defence of their common error. And it has cost the world more trouble to get rid of mistakes, thus entailed upon it by authority, than it has met with from all the other stoppages, in the way to true science, whatever.

If we look into the writings of their most eminent philosophers, we shall find, that *Aristotle*, instead of following Nature, endeavored, by every stratagem, to catch her in the subtle nets of his logic, and to lead her after him in a string of predicaments : as

well might the spider have attempted to bind the brindled lion in her cobweb.

It may be said, he did not draw his confined notions from the academic school; and that *Plato* had better designs and more enlarged views: but if he had, it was a pity he should go into a wood in search of truth, *inter sylvas quærere verum*; as he seems by that means to have lost both himself, and all who came after him, in endless intricacies. Had he chose the more open country for his prospect, he might perhaps have had a clearer view of those abstract forms and ideas, which in the other situation puzzled him so much: but that vapor and condensed air, which is apt to settle about trees and groves, spoiled all, and rendered every thing confused.

If these two great masters of *Grecian* wisdom excelled in any thing, it was in their rules about government; but even these, (exclusive of the ideal part of them, which was contrived only for *Utopia*,) were calculated, more for *Greece*, than for the world at large. Indeed *Greece* was the world then, and its separate states the different and respective nations of it. How then shall we compare

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the state of things, which obtained at that time, to the present? when that, which was the whole world *then*, is *now* but one of the meanest and most abject provinces, it contains?

Rome, the next seat of human grandeur, made small advances, beyond what *Greece* had done, except in extent of empire; a nation of warriors and patriots, full of conquest and the honor of arms, were attentive to little else, except what immediately promoted their favorite project, and great ambition of universal empire. And it was not, till they had well nigh effected this grand purpose, that the arts gained any considerable attention among them. Though, when they did bend their thoughts this way, it must be owned, they made a most surprising progress; they even outdid their masters in many instances, and perhaps equalled them in all; particularly in ethics, didactic and satiric poetry, they seem to have gone far beyond the *Greeks*; *Tully's* offices, *Horace's* epistles and satires, with those of *Juvenal* and *Perfius*, standing almost without a rival to vie with them. And indeed their knowledge of all kinds appears to have been much more accurate and defined, than that

of the Greeks. Their history has less of fable, and more of common life in it; and even their poetry has less of what has been since called romance, and more good sense in it, than that of the others.

But the age of learning was extremely short at *Rome*; no sooner had it attained to any thing like maturity, than it fell, almost at once, into mere dotage; in which sickly state it languished a few years; and then sunk to nothing. It was not long, after arts and sciences began to grow respectable here, that, the constitution being changed, and the seat of empire removed from it's native soil to a country, where it never thrrove, the vast fabric of *Roman* greatness fell to pieces, even by it's own * weight, as it were; and opened a passage for the inroads of those horrid barbarians, who, being bred in poverty and ignorance, were better suited to mortify, and take a more ample revenge of those haughty lords, who had long affected to be masters

* *Livy* says of it, before the event happened, "Ab " exiguis profecta initiis, eo creverat, ut jam magnitudine laboret sua." And farther adds, that he supposes his readers will hasten on " ad hæc nova quibus " jampridem prævalentis populi vires se ipse confi- " ciunt."

masters of the whole world ; every monument of whose pride now felt their savage hands.

The cloud of darkness, which after this event, so fatal to letters, overspread the face of all human affairs, makes a most dreadful void in the history of science : though it was but the natural consequence of one nation's arrogating to itself supreme dominion ; which is no otherwise to be acquired, or maintained by those, who attempt it, than by carefully keeping to themselves all learning, riches, and means of power from the rest of mankind, who are to be their slaves ; and consequently they and learning must fall together. This, it is to be hoped, will never again be the case ; it cannot, at least, happen by the same means, so long as there are rival nations, jealous of each other's greatness, and whose interest it is, and is known to be, to maintain, what is called, a balance of power.

From this cloud mankind, some years ago, happily emerged ; and have recovered enough of antient learning, if not to satisfy their curiosity, at least to inform them of almost every thing material, that was known in the world before. The space included between
this

A new Estimate of
this æra and the present, is what in general I
mean by modern times, when they are men-
tioned with reference to former ages; but
it is equally true, that we have been im-
proving from that time to this.

What comparison then shall we institute
between antient knowledge and modern ac-
quisitions, when the whole sum of the for-
mer makes but as it were the basis, on which
the latter are built? We can easily make all,
that men formerly knew, our own; and then,
without being tired with any previous search,
with all our vigor fresh about us, can from
thence set out on new discoveries; which
we are still more likely to attain to, because
we can calmly look down from our emi-
nence, and see where they, who went before
us, were misled and lost their way; can cor-
rect their mistakes, avoid their errors, and
mark out, and pursue, with less embarras-
ment, the direct road, which leads to truth.

C H A P. V.

A general comparison between ancient and modern learning.

IT is not to be supposed however, that I mean to assert every thing to have been error and mistake in these our schoolmasters: I would not be suspected of being capable of looking, with indifference, at those stupendous instances of former greatness, *Rome* and *Athens*. It is impossible to survey them without perceiving many circumstances, which strike the mind with awful admiration.

What *superstition to their gods, or adulation to their heroes vanity, led them to excel in, they carried to an amazing height of perfection. It is from hence we see and

own

* Perhaps a similar superstition in modern *Rome*, the adoration paid to the shrines and pictures of saints, &c. may be as strong a reason, as any other, why the *Italians* have continued so long to excel in the arts of sculpture and painting. We know in fact, that amongst ourselves some of the noblest specimens of architecture, we have to boast of, were the works of *Gothic* ignorance, stirred up by zeal and devotion, at a time, when it cannot be said, the arts were in any degree of perfection, equal to the present.

own their superior excellence in architecture, statuary, and their appendant arts. But they seem to have employed their genius and industry, chiefly in some of the inferior parts of science; and appear to have been principally busied; to have spent most of their time and attention, in ornamenting the inlets and gates of knowledge; as if conscious, it was not permitted to their unhallowed feet to enter into her temple. Their goddess wore a *veil, and they either durst not, or did not, attempt to pull it off. They knew scarce any thing, as we do. They never searched into the hidden sources of science. Their knowledge like the *Nile* was divided into different channels, but they knew nothing of it's head. They wrote laws, but they understood nothing of the *spirit of laws*. They reasoned, but they were intirely unacquainted with the *powers of the mind, or how it acquired it's ideas*. They saw matter, and they saw motion; but they were quite ignorant of the *nature* of the one, and of the *laws*, by which the other was governed. Their knowledge, in short, was drawn rather

* *Velum meum revelavit nemo.*

Part of an old inscription in an *Egyptian* temple of *Minerva*.

ther from their own brain, than from nature. They trusted more to fancy, than to facts: and, like those ingenious architects, who begin their building from the roof, they framed curious hypotheses, which had no foundation to support them. Whereas we, leaving the airy flights of imagination, have taken the surer, though more humble path of sober reason and chastized reflexion; and ground our deductions on correct experiments, and accurate observation. Their knowledge extended only to a few particulars; we know somewhat of almost every thing, that can be known, the boundaries of learning having been as much enlarged by late discoveries, as those of the habitable globe have been by the addition of a new world. The powers of mechanism, and other parts of useful science have been carried to such perfection, as former times could never have conceived possible; to such indeed, as the present may hardly esteem credible. To enumerate particulars is impossible; the very catalogue and mere index of our improvements would fill as many volumes, as heretofore contained all the knowledge, which mankind were possessed of.

C H A P. VI.

Some particulars, which are likely to be disputed.

NOtwithstanding the above general comparison turns out so favorable to present times ; there are some, to whose narrow minds one particular art or science seems to include all excellence ; and who, on that account, will still give the preference to former days.

It is for this reason the man of classic learning, who fancies, that all knowledge, of any worth, is confined to *grammar, rhetoric, and poetry*, will sigh, that his lot of life was not cast in the *Augustan* age. The man of war will wish, he had seen the dispositions of *Cæsar*, or of *Hannibal* ! the devout and serious *Christian*, with a better heart, though not much better reason, will carry back his desire of having lived nearer to that memorable æra, when the Son of God, by coming into the world, enlightened and improved mankind.

Look into these respective ages, and you will find men wishing, in the same manner, to have lived farther back still ; which shews of itself the wish to be absurd.

But

But let us examine, in their order, a little more narrowly into these several particulars, and bring their merits to a nearer view.*

* It may perhaps be said, that I might have carried this chapter to a much greater length, by inserting many other particulars, which are as likely to be disputed with me, as the above. —— Indeed I believe, I might have made the chapter endless by that means; so many, and such strenuous advocates have the ancients to defend their cause in every instance! a principal reason of which may possibly be this; boys are early flogged into a high opinion of their worth and excellence; and they cannot easily bring themselves to think afterwards, that all the harsh treatment, which they suffered, on this account, from the *plagosus Orbilius*, who had the ordering of their youth, was for any thing less, than matters of the highest importance: on the contrary, having at length, by labour and application, acquired a competent skill in Greek and Latin, they are apt to imagine, they have attained the very summit of human learning; and look down from thence on the other parts of it, as low and groveling. To this pride of theirs, we may add a love of ease, which renders them unwilling to enter upon any new branch of knowledge, where all the drudgery of first principles must again be undertaken; especially, as they find their vanity sufficiently flattered already, by being looked upon in the eye of the world, as *polite scholars*. If some of our best English authors had the sanction given them of being taught at school; this attachment to antiquity, merely as such, would gradually wear off; boys would learn sense as well as sound; and our language, in time, receive the improvements, of which it is capable.

C H A P. VII.

Of language, and those parts of science, which depend more immediately upon it, such as rhetoric, poetry, &c.

PLEASED with having learned to talk, the ancients took vast pains to shew the acquisition, they had made; hence the many bawbles of grammar, rhetoric, and poetry, to be found amongst them. But what are these more, than mere toys and rattles, well enough suited indeed to the infancy of the world, but which it's manly and more philosophic age must needs hold in low estimation?

All pretensions then to superior excellence, in these instances, might be given up on the side of the moderns, without interfering at all with the plan, which I have hitherto been advancing: since, though science in general be like a river, and increases the farther it is removed from the small springs, which gave rise to it; yet some parts of it resemble rather lakes or standing ponds, formed occasionally perhaps from the overflowings of the other, but which in return contribute nothing to it's enlargement;

* W
given u
“ chestr
“ rum
“ quum
“ dente

ment; so far from that, being incapable of increase themselves, beyond a certain pitch, they may accidentally be dried up, without affecting in the least degree the course of the other, which still runs on as before,

— “ *Viresque acquirit eundo.*”

In fact, whatever depends upon experiment and observation, (which all the nobler and more useful parts of knowledge do) is capable of continual improvement. But eloquence and poetry, as soon as the language of a people is at all formed, may be as complete in a single age, as the experience of a thousand could make them. Nay, early times have some manifest advantages in this respect: their language must necessarily abound most in metaphors and allusions, which are the great ornaments of eloquence and poetry: the simplicity too of men's manners, at such times gives a boldness and freedom to their sentiments, which will hereafter be expressed with more caution and diffidence. Even their knowing no better raises a *confidence,

* We have an instance of this kind of assurance given us by *Suetonius*. “ *Germanorum legatis in orchestra sedere permisit (Claudius) simplicitate eorum & fiducia motus, quod in popularia deducti, quum animadvertisserint Parthos & Armenios sedentes in senatu ad eadem loca sponte transierunt.*”

fidence, and an honest assurance in them, which add a wonderful force and energy to what they say. And it is highly probable, that the *Indian* chiefs, who now figure it so much in oratory before the assemblies of our colonies, will grow less eloquent, though not less learned, as they become more civilized, and leave off throwing down their belts of wampum, at the close of their periods.

A particular reason too might be assigned, why the *Greeks* and *Romans*, when their manners became more refined, should excel us in these instances. *They* had * error to deck out; *we*, truth: the former of which is a much finer subject for fiction and flowing language, than the latter. The tinsel and paint, which add charms to the harlot,

would

And perhaps the speech given to our countryman *Caratacus* by *Tacitus*, which seems drawn on purpose to suit a simplicity of manners, is the finest piece of oratory, that ever was included in so small a quantity of words.

* So much advantage has error in this respect, that let two persons with equal powers of oration set out; the one, to teach our holy religion in all its purity; the other, to propagate some wild enthusiastic notions about it; the number of converts, I would venture to say, made by the former, would bear no proportion to those of the latter.

* It w
it, if a
parliame
ls, &c.

would suit but ill with the grace and dignity of the matron. It is for this reason, that all our poets apostatize from their religion, and turn worshippers of *Apollo* and the *Muses*; and, when they want any strong coloring, are obliged to have recourse to *Pagan* rites and ceremonies: so that, if by any means the *Pantheon* should be lost, one half of them would not be intelligible to the *English* reader. Even the great *Milton* himself, is but a kind of heathen-christian, having plainly shaped his angels after the pattern of *Homer*'s deities. How much it is for the honor of our holy religion, to have it's sacred mysteries dressed in the garb of heathen mythology, shall be left to others to determine.

These things being considered, whether we may pretend to rival the ancients in point of eloquence, I know not. Having had little access to the houses of parliament the only places, I suspect, where any thing like true oratory is practised among us) I have never heard our English *Demosthenes*; from some * speeches however, occasionally pub-

* It would certainly do our country no small credit, if a collection of some of the best speeches in parliament was separately published, *Debates, Journals, &c.* being too voluminous to find them in.

published, one would be inclined to think, if we fall short of the antient orators in any thing,

The Clergy must excuse me for not mentioning the Pulpit on this occasion ; as I am satisfied, there is not much eloquence shewn there ; though more now, than formerly has been.

Indeed it is not easy to determine, how much it ought to be practised there. From the specimens of what one sees *Whitfield*, and his crew, able to do with mankind, by a very coarse application of this talent, one might conclude, it would not be much for the quiet of the community, to have the passions much stirred by religious eloquence. And this is the misfortune of all eloquence, that it's greatest influence is over the weakest understandings, where it is just as likely to do harm, as good. All therefore, which probably ought to be attempted from the pulpit in this way, is manly sense and sober reason, with a very moderate proportion of ornament, and a serious, earnest, emphatic elocution. But this is humbly submitted to the judgement of the great *National Preacher*, who knows so much better, what his brethren ought to do.

As for the Bar, the practice and method of pleading there, affords the modern advocate little opportunity of displaying any thing like eloquence. Our laws are so numerous, and adjudged cases so common, that the pleader has little else to do but to explain their intent and meaning, on the one side and on the other, to puzzle and perplex it : as for any address to the passions of the judge or jury, cases of doing that, with any propriety, seldom happen, except in the occasional trials of state criminals in which instances our lawyers have always done justice to their character, and their clients.

thing, it can only be in action; (which however, it must be owned, was adjudged to be almost the whole of the matter by one of it's greatest masters, though his opinion does not give one the highest idea of it's worth) as for sense and language, these specimens are clearly equal, if not superior, to any productions of antiquity.

But let not the choir of *Parnassus* be alarmed: notwithstanding the uncertainty, which I have expressed about eloquence; I do not mean so tamely to give up the bays. On the contrary, could my vote determine it; I would give it in favor of the moderns, without hesitation.

With regard to language, after all the pains, which the *Greeks* and *Romans* have taken with their's; they are both as far from being philosophic languages, as our's, or the *French*; and contain almost as many anomalies in them: in point of perspicuity, the advantage, by means of particles and auxiliaries, seems clearly on our side: and for numbers, all antiquity cannot produce such an instance of their power and harmony, as *Dryden's Ode on Saint Cecilia's Day*.

But the cause of the Muses is of too much consequence to be rested on one single in-

stance, however striking it may appear. And yet to enumerate in a particular comparison all the Odes, Elegies, Epics, &c. which ancient and modern wit has produced, would be an endless business, in all senses. Perhaps we may shorten the inquiry, by dividing poetry into three distinct sorts, as it is more immediately directed either to the head, the heart, or the imagination. The first kind is that which has been called the *didactic*; the second will include the *elegiac* and *dramatic*; and under the * third, may be ranked the

loftier

* I have reckoned that sort last, which, I know, is by those of high taste esteemed the first; but when the poet neither instructs me, nor raises in my breast any tender emotions, he sinks, in my estimation, into a character, very little superior to that of a wire-dancer. I may say with *Horace*,

*Ille per extentum funem mibi posse videtur
Ire poeta.*

But then all he does, is merely to surprise me with instances of art and agility. He may indeed sometimes, by the pictures which he draws, or the harmony of his numbers, rise to the praise of a good painter, or a skillful musician. But at best, I should as soon compare *Giardini*'s tricks upon the fiddle to sound music; as the sublime *Epic*, or star-striking *Pindaric*, to the more chastised kinds of poetry; where the muse condescends to be the handmaid of philosophy; and endeavors to give her mistress fresh charms, whilst she is employed in delivering the great precepts of truth; in tracing out the spring of

human

loftier sort of *Odes*, together with the descriptive, that is, far the greatest part of the *Epic*.

Every

human actions; in laying open the sources of our passions; and teaching us, how to moderate them. The great Thunderer's nod, in *Homer*, has no charms for me; indeed the only line almost, which I ever read in him with sincere pleasure, is that, in which the pensive, unhappy father is described, after his suit had been rejected;

"Βη δ' ακεν παρα Θινα πολυφλοισθοιο Θαλασσης."

Though perhaps there may be some reason to suspect, that the pathos even of this line is more accidental, than designed. The circumstances, which give the heightening to it seem to be principally the place, where the old man takes his walk; (the sea-side being peculiarly adapted to melancholy contemplation;) and the contrast between his grief-bred silence, and the noise of the beating surge, strongly conveyed to the mind by the epithet, *πολυφλοισθοιο*. But as for his walking by the sea-side, there was probably nothing more intended by it, than merely to signify his going out of the camp, which was situated just by. To shew, that the poet did not choose this piece of scenery, as peculiarly suited to his purpose on this occasion, we may observe, that he makes the Greeks do almost every thing there — *παρα Θινα*, or *επι ρημιας Θαλασσης*, they eat, fight, and play. And as for any peculiar beauty in the epithet, *πολυφλοισθοιο*, his using it always indiscriminately, whenever the metre requires such a word, inclines one to think, that it owes the propriety, which it has in this place, more to our ideas, than to his; who seems to have meant nothing more by it, than he does by his *επεια πτεροειδα*; *ηνα μελαινην*; or indeed almost any other of his epithets; which appear, in general,

Every other species, of whatever denomination, is but a different mixture of the above.

To

to be chose more on account of their being dactyles or spondees, than for any other assignable reason whatever. Why else do we hear of *ποδας ωντος Αχιλλευς*, or *κορυθαιολογος Εκτωρ*, when the busines is only to make a speech? where *ιωδρα ιδων*, or *χωριενογος κηρη* might have a propriety, but the others none. Thus we have *ωλυμηις Οδυσσευς*, when his honorable employment is no more, than what the greatest ideot might have performed, as well as himself; only to take those by the heel, whom *Diomede* had knocked down, and drag them out of his way,

————— Αταρ ΠΟΛΥΜΗΤΙΣ Οδυσσευς,

‘Οντινα Τυδειδης αορι πληξειε παραστας,

Του δ' Οδυσσευς μειωιδε λαβων ποδος εξεριστασκε. Il. X.

He might have found a much better opportunity, for using this epithet a little below (had not he been guided in his choice by the reason above mentioned) where *Ulysses*, by a most surprising stretch of thought, discovers that his bow will supply the place of a whip; but here he uses a very different one,

Τοφρα δ' αρ' ο ΤΛΗΜΩΝ Οδυσσευς λυε μωνυχας ιπως;

Συν δ' ηειρεν ιμασι, κυ εξηλαυνεν ομιλια

ΤΟΞΩι ΕΠΙΠΛΗΣΣΩΝ, εωει 8 μαστιγα Φαεινη

Ποικιλια εκ διφροιο νοησαλο χερσιν έλεθαι.

Ροιξησεν δ' αρα. &c. —— ΚΟΠΤΕ δ' Οδυσσευς

ΤΟΞΩι. τοι δ' επειονιο, &c. Il. X. y. 498.

What is here said of *Homer*, and elsewhere of other ancients, is not meant, so much, to point out any defect in them; (whose merit, all things considered, must be acknowledged to be very great) as to shew the want of candor in critics, who weigh their merit, and that of the moderns, in very different scales; and will not throw in the same grains of allowance in the one case, as in the other.

To give an instance of comparison then in each of the three sorts, can it be at all doubted, but that *Pope's Ethic Epistles* far excel every thing of the kind in ancient poetry? Will not *Milton* be allowed to stand at least, upon the same level with *Homer* and *Virgil*? And may not some Odes, lately published from *Strawberry Hill*, justly claim the precedence of any in *Pindar*? The second sort then is the only one left, in which the excellency can be disputed with us. And even in this, with regard to the *elegiac*, one need not be afraid of meeting with much contradiction, if one should say, that no age or country ever produced an elegy, comparable to that in a *Country Church Yard*.

But in point of dramatic perfection, it seems on all hands agreed, that the moderns must give way to the ancients. If we ask, why? it will be answered, Because we have no chorus in our plays; which however, it must be owned, got it's place in those of the ancients more through necessity, than choice. It had the right of prior possession, which could not easily be set aside. Plays at first, were nothing but little interludes, made to diversify certain choral songs, in honor of *Bacchus*, the first species of the drama, that ap-

appeared. When these were improved into more regular and perfect pieces, the chorus still maintained it's place by virtue of it's age, and the deference, which was paid to it on that account.

That it adds a dignity to the drama, must perhaps be allowed; and to those, who are fond of shows and processions, it would no doubt greatly enhance the merit of a play. That it is the guardian, or rather parent of the unities, is another point, which cannot well be disputed: for as it consists of a number of persons, got together in a great measure by accident, it cannot well be supposed, that these can be kept together long; or be easily removed from place to place. But then how confined, in respect to variety, must this needs render the drama? for how few actions, or plots are there of any importance, which will admit the supposition of being compleated in two, or even in twelve hours, or in one and the same place? and if you once begin the magic of scene-shifting, it may as well be extended from the palace to the forum, as from one room in the palace to another.

They too, who judge from nature, and not from rules laid down by *Aristotle*, and

a set of critics, whose aim it has been to follow him, rather than nature, will not perhaps be inclined to think, that probability is much consulted by the introduction of a chorus. An *acting audience*, which seems to be the true character of the chorus, may, in itself, be no very improbable thing: but an *acting audience*, which at the same time supposes another, *hearing audience* present, whose judgement it is to inform and regulate, is an utter outrage against all probability. Besides this *acting audience*, which is to direct the other's judgement, (of the propriety and good tendency of which, to the manners of the common people, a great deal has been said) is generally so mysterious in delivering its own, that it is usually the most difficult part of the play to be understood: the songs of the Sybils themselves could scarcely be more obscure, than some of the *Greek choruses* must needs have been to common understandings.*

It is still more absurd to suppose, that a set of persons fitted for the purpose, should all

* What *Horace* says,

Sortilegis non discrepuit sententia Delphis,
is true of the chorus in more senses, than one.

all be got together, without any apparent or previous reason for it, prepared with the finest flights of poetry; such, as do not seem to spring from any sentiments of the heart, excited by the turns and incidents of what is transacting, but are merely the visionary work of imagination, carried into too long a train of distant ideas to arise from any present, momentary impulse: and these, to take the business still farther out of nature's path, are to be accompanied by the highest strains of harmony, and all the pomp of music.

That they too, who constitute the chorus, should either follow the principal character into his private apartment, where he might properly deliberate; or that he should deliberate aloud in an open court-yard, before fifty different persons; who are all to be made acquainted with the inmost * secrets of his heart; and yet are to interfere no otherwise, than by advice; when perhaps the very worst of actions and designs are carrying on; are all of them matters, which accord but ill with the common notions of what constitutes the probable.

Lastly,

* *Ille tegat commissa*, — and that of all the characters indiscriminately.

Lastly, that a set of inferior characters, (such as the chorus in most cases must consist of, that the upper parts may be filled with proper dignity) should have influence to controul; authority to dictate; or understanding to advise, and to deliver the great precepts of truth; is such a stretch to all seeming, as nothing, but the poet's licence, *quidlibet audendi*, can possibly give a sanction to.*

Many

* For an instance of the impropriety, intended to be marked here, let any one read the *TPAXINIAI* of *Sophocles*; in which the chorus, who ought to read lectures to *Hercules* “de dolore tolerando,” consists of nothing better, than merely a set of gossips: call them priestesses, or what you will, an old woman can be nothing, but an old woman: and a young one cannot well be supposed to have much influence, in matters of morality.

Accordingly, after *Hercules* appears upon the stage, this respectable chorus, of young or old ladies, whichever they be, does nothing like what *Horace* determines to be it's duty —

(*Ut regat iratos, et amet pacare tumentes*)

offers not a word, either to comfort *Hercules*, or vindicate *Deianira*; but immediately, as if conscious of it's own insignificance, seems to shrink away to one side of the stage, and stands almost mute for the remainder of the play; only the leading lady just informs us, that “ Her hair stood on end at hearing “ of her master's misfortunes:” that “ It must be a “ sad thing for *Greece* to be deprived of such a “ man:” and that “ She was determined to stay to the

“ end

Many other particulars might however have been taken notice of; such as, one person's expressing the sentiments of twelve, or any number of others, without any mutual consultation; which is the case of the *acting* part of the chorus; or, a number of persons delivering the same sentiments in precisely the same words, which is the case in the *singing* part. The circumstance of an

OMNES,

“ end of these dismal doings, (perhaps, to see the funeral) though to be sure, nothing of this sort could happen, without Jupiter's having a hand in it.” These are the only observations, she has to make upon the occasion, which, as *Shakespear* expresses it, seems to be “ The true butter-woman's rate to market.” Though it must be owned, the monster-killer lets himself down as much, as he well can, to their level, by the most feminine complaints, that ever an opera-hero uttered: for a specimen, hear him,

A: A: ω $\tau\alpha\lambda\alpha\varsigma$, ፩, ፩.

This makes a whole line in a long speech of his, consisting of 130; that is, if the common division be right, within five lines as long, as the whole Third Act; very natural, no doubt, for one in his circumstances, dying, as he describes himself to be, with excruciating pains! — Where too could an *English* translator find whimpering interjections, enough to render this puny lamentation by, unless he went to miss in the nursery, just as little master had bit her finger, or scratched her doll's cap off?

I shall say nothing of the little attention, which seems to be paid to the article of time in this play, notwithstanding

OMNES, in one of our plays, agreeing in the same form of expression, has frequently afforded matter of just ridicule to the critics; how much more justly might this same circumstance have provoked their censure in the chorus, where it is carried to a much greater height of absurdity? Such a parcel of lifeless mutes too upon the stage, (which could be but ill avoided by making a first and second chorus) must hang like so many

withstanding it is wrote in *Greek*, and has a chorus; though to preserve any thing like a unity in this respect, *Hercules*, *Hyllus*, and *Lydas*, must all be supposed to have travelled in *seven-league boots*. Neither shall I take notice of many other strange particulars, such as *Hercules*'s desiring his son to marry his whore, who had been the cause of his mother's death; &c. because they are not much to the present purpose.

It might however be difficult for any one to assign a good reason, why *Hercules* is brought upon the stage at all, unless it were merely to shew, how loud he could roar; as he never makes his appearance, till the fifth act; till the principal character is dead, and the chorus has sung her last song; that is in short, till the play, or at least all the distress of it, is over. But perhaps the poet knew he could not raise in his audience an idea, of distresses enough, on *Deianira*'s account, nor even on *Hercules*'s, unless he exhibited him *ALIVE*, and made him bellow a little: as if the *Athenian* theatre had cried out, with the humorous Old Knight, "Prick me *BULL-CALF* till he roar:" but, could this be contrived for an audience of taste?

many dead weights upon every movement; especially in the *Greek* theatre, where, by being masked, they could not even shew the concern they had, in what was going on, by their looks and features.

Perhaps, if we must have a chorus, the only way of remedying all these inconveniences, would be to form it of certain *Genii*, *Sylphs*, or *Gnomes*, — who might easily be supposed to be perfectly acquainted with all human transactions, without having any right to interfere in them; and yet might take a pleasure in hymning their sentiments about them. The songs of these imaginary beings, might give as many breathing times to the poet and his audience, as he thought proper; (for it is not easy to see the necessity of their being precisely five, though both *Greek* and *Latin* authority has determined it so) And being intirely under his management, he might take care to let them sing only just so much, as would be to his purpose,

— *Quod proposito conducat, & hæreat aptè.*

These songs would undoubtedly fill up the space, between the *Acts*, with much greater dignity, and propriety, than the poor shifts of a ballad, or a dance, which at present we have recourse to. Here too would

* By a
natural f

be room for all the powers of music to shew themselves. And here the poet might be properly delivered of all the towering flights of imagination, which could not be so fitly introduced into the more sober drama. Into these characters, besides, he might throw as much oracular wisdom, and moral instruction, as he pleased: whilst, in the mean time, the acting part of the chorus, in the body of the play, might be much more naturally supplied, as it is amongst the moderns, by a friend, or a confidant.

It may be objected to this, that it would be likely to encourage superstition among the vulgar; but what is there so perfect, as that no objections can be made to it?

In short, as the great business of the stage is, to please us into instruction and improvement; to humanize the heart, either by deriving it into temporary pleasure, or by affecting it with imaginary ills, and fancied scenes of distress; the poet, who has the greatest power over the imagination; who can, for a certain time, carry us with him, in his fancy's chariot, wherever he listeth; provided he does not hurt or shock * us by

* By *us* I mean those who are guided by their natural feelings, not those, who are governed by a

by the violence of his motions, seems to pursue the best and most probable path for obtaining his end. In this light all the sons of *Apollo*, ancient and modern, do not equal the single worth of *Shakespear*; *Shakespear*, “whose eye (to use his own best words)

— “ *In a fine fancy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;* &c

And who (as he elsewhere expresses himself) “ Holds as it were the mirrour up to “ nature; shews virtue her own feature, “ scorn her own image; and the very age and “ body of the time, his form and pressure.”

However, if the old method must needs be thought the best; there is an instance ready at hand to shew, that the modern can excel the ancients, even in their own way. It will easily be guessed, I mean *Caractacus*; which, for the august and solemn scenery, the majesty of the characters, the dignity, propriety, and poetry of the chorus exceeds the most perfect model, which the ancients have left us.

capricious and whimsical taste of their own acquiring; whose greatest pleasure consists in being much displeased, as possible; and who therefore seek for as many opportunities of being shocked, as they can find.

I have been carried so far in the road of criticism, that I am led to say somewhat of the thing itself.

How much beyond former clumsiness then, are the modern refinements of this art? how elegant, delicate, and correct, are the Notes and Comments, lately published on Two Epistles of *Horace*? and what a mere *Florilegium* does even *Longinus* appear to be, when compared with the philology^{sophy}, contained in the *Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*? In short to such a pitch of improvement has this art been brought; that one may venture to affirm, there is more good sense and rational criticism, to be met with in one of our common * *Monthly Reviews*, than in all the old *scholia* put together.

But to say the truth, Critics and Commentators usually infest only the lighter, and more trifling parts of science; such as poetry, philology, &c. just as wasps and hornets settle about hollow trees, and unsound earth:

* Perhaps this will be looked upon, as a *sop for Cerberus*: I cannot say, that was my original intention in making the comparison; but if it answers that good end, and carries me safely past that frightful monster, I shall have the highest opinion of my own good management.

earth: and there is, for that reason, this plain sign of superior strength and soundness in modern learning, that this sort of insects dare scarce attempt to fasten upon it. There will never be the same number of critics and commentators, upon *Locke* and *Montesquieu*, that there has been upon *Plato* and *Aristotle*. And why? because the opinions of the latter are so vague and undetermined, that they afford ample room for conjectures and explanations; whereas the former are so accurate and precise, any attempt to explain them would but render them confused. It is from hence possibly the complaint has arisen, which one has sometimes heard made by those, who have had the education of youth committed to them, that they found it extremely difficult to read lectures, at least to their own satisfaction, upon *Locke*. The cause really is, he has left extremely little for any one to add to what he himself has said.

CHAP. VIII.

Some general observations on ancient and modern learning.

TO close this long disquisition about antient and modern learning, the different lights, in which they may fairly be considered, seem to be as follows.

The view of antient learning, where every now and then a striking sentiment appears, is not unlike that of a wide extensive country, uncultivated for the most part; but in which, here and there, you will discover a pile of magnificence; which, from the situation it is in, receives an additional grandeur. Whereas the modern state of science resembles more some favorite spot of ground; on which every thing, that either labor or art could contribute, has been freely bestowed; where the whole is in a manner finished and complete; but, for want of contrast, no particular part is so likely to catch the attention.

It is from hence, that the ancients are thought to abound more in the sublime, than the moderns. Barren countries always afford the most striking prospects: the Δ EI-
NON and the Φ OBEPON are most remarkable there.

It is for the same reason some have imagined, they excel us also in *Genius*. Having had the first free range into nature, they seized to themselves, what they esteemed most worthy of their regard; just as the first travellers in an unknown country mark down the most remarkable mountains, lakes and rivers, which they meet with there. But then they, who come after them, and take a more accurate survey, cannot justly be said to have less genius, than the others, or to be only their imitators; though perhaps they give us the same rivers, lakes, and mountains, which the others had done before.

The moderns too, by their practice of quotation, have greatly contributed to lessen their own character in this respect, and to raise that of the antients. At the revival of learning, all the knowledge in the world was necessarily drawn from the old fountains, which were now again laid open; and men were scholars in proportion, as they were more or less acquainted with these. Afterwards, when they began to think a little for themselves; as if they had been afraid to go alone, or trust themselves out of leading-strings, they were glad to seek for supports, to what they advanced, in the opinions of

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the antients; which by this means were raised to such a degree of authority and importance, that what was matter of choice in a great measure at first, became in time almost necessary; scarce any thing being thought right, which was not confirmed by some instance of former wisdom to the same purpose. Men, for this reason, were put upon straining the sentiments of the ancients to meanings, which they never dreamt of: and from hence, in many cases, the moderns have been suspected of borrowing from them, what in fact they first gave them, by their own forced interpretations.

It is no concern of mine however, to decide the controversy of merit between the two. All I am inquiring about is, only, to find out, who know the most; not what merit each might have in acquiring the knowledge, they are masters of. *Columbus* might have more merit, as the Discoverer of *America*, than *Hernan Cortez* had; — but, notwithstanding his pretensions, it is certain, the other penetrated farther into it; and may, without any injury done to the former's reputation, be styled, and have the praise of being, it's Conqueror.

C H A P. IX.

Of the art of War.

THE art of war is so totally changed, that it is hardly possible to compare, what it is with what it was.*

However, if it is become rather a more civilized business; if the work of bloodshed be sooner over; if the fate of a pitched battle be sooner decided; if the carnage, which ensues, be less dreadful; and the conquered, especially that unfortunate part of them, who are made prisoners, be treated with greater humanity; we may well say, it is improved. We might also appeal to living instances of Heroes, greater than any, which *Rome* or *Greece* ever saw; whose fame was chiefly owing to their having to deal only with barbarous

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* “ If in any thing we deviate from the practice of the antients, it is in our military discipline, in which we are so absolutely new, that there is scarce any thing used, that was preferred by our ancestors.” *Machiavel.*

† The subscription now going forward in favor of the *French* prisoners, wretches left to starve by their own king and country; will be a lasting honor to this nation in point of humanity! but this consideration properly belongs to another place.

and unpolished nations; whom it was scarce any merit to conquer, their own unskilfulness had so great a share in the victor's success.

But, however true it may be, that the world is improved in this, as well as in other instances; how much more desireable a truth would it be, to say, that our other improvements had rendered all attention to this less necessary!

And did not the matter of fact, of almost all *Europe's* being engaged in war at present, stand in our way; it might perhaps be no difficult undertaking to make this appear a probable hypothesis. One may see, how, by the first institution of government, private quarrels were, in a great measure, superseded; the feuds and animosities of particulars being made subject to the decision of common laws. The imperfect state indeed of these governments at first left room, too frequently, for particulars to dispute the public authority: and hence arose the calamity of civil war. But now, by the improvements made in most of the governments in *Europe*, we have ceased in a great measure to hear that worst of sounds, the din of civil discord. May there not then be some room to hope,

hope, from these two gradual advances towards perfection; that, if *Germany* and some of the other less perfect states here, with the whole unsettled Western world, (which have of late afforded the chief materials for public broils) were to receive the same improvements, which other states have; there would almost an end be put to all occasion for public, as well as civil wars? when we should see the law of nations have as full effect, as the law of particular kingdoms: when that most desireable of all prophecies, yet unfulfilled, might receive it's full completion; when, " Nation should no more lift " up sword against nation; neither should " they learn war any more."

If there be not room to hope for this, there is at least sufficient reason to wish for it; since what deforms the fair and regular appearance of things so much, as the horrid outrages of war; even when it is conducted by the best rules, which civilized nations have imposed upon it, to tame it's fiercer spirit?

However, till this most happy event can take place, we may well add the following wish to the former;—that so long, as war is to be the resource of empires, quarrelling with each

each other, *Britain* may never want such * gallant hearts and able heads, to defend her interests, as have lately raised her glory, and their own honor to such an amazing height !

* As the Soldier's character, so long as it is necessary, must ever be one of the most respectable in all states ; and may well claim every instance of praise from us sons of peace, who enjoy the ease, which they, at the hazard of their lives, purchase for us ; so should nothing prevent me from offering the poor tribute of my praise, on this occasion to all those, who have, during the course of this war, done so much honor to themselves and their country ; but that their number renders a particular mention of their names almost impossible : since if I once began to quote the particular persons, who deserved to be distinguished, I should almost write a complete list of his Majesty's forces, both by sea and land, from the Admiral and General, down to the common seaman and soldier ; and so should make it no distinction at all : indeed there can not well be any made, but between those, who have been in service, and those, who have not ; which last, if they had had the same opportunity, would, I am perswaded, have discharged their duty as faithfully, as the others.

C H A P. X.

Of Religion, considered as a Science.

AS to Religion, men seem to have followed their senses first, in the choice of objects to worship ; their passions, next ; and last of all, their reason.

Even the Deity, in the different revelations of himself to mankind, seems to have acted in a manner, somewhat analogous to this.

To our first father and early patriarchs he appeared in bodily shape, like a man ; the highest degree of excellence, to which their ideas probably then reached. He afterwards cloathed himself in more majesty and splendor ; and was not visible to the *Jews*, but in clouds, or in fire : still however did he talk even to them of the strength of his arm, and the furiousness of his wrath ; and endeavoured to influence them to a discharge of their duty, by setting before them temporal rewards and punishments ; the weakness of their understanding, even yet, not suffering them to look at any higher things. But at last, when the fullness of time was come, he “ brought life and immortality to light ;” and

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has represented himself, as far as it was possible, to our narrow comprehensions, as he is ; in doing which he seemingly considered mankind as having now attained to stronger powers of reasoning, and therefore capable of receiving more sublime truths, than heretofore ; “ the Law having been strictly,” as the scripture says, “ our SCHOOLMASTER “to bring us unto *Christ*.”*

How-

* Perhaps a reason, as satisfactory as any other, might be deduced from hence, why Christianity has not been more extensively dispersed in the world, than it is. A great part of mankind may be, for ought we know, really incapable, through their ignorance, of receiving it.

But then to solve, how this itself should come to pass, would be another inquiry, as difficult as the former ; in the pursuit of which, if any one should say, “ that mankind appeared to consist of several different species, naturally distinct from each other,” what great degree of absurdity would there be in the supposition ? We see this, in fact, with regard to Dogs, and some other Kinds of animals ; among which one species shall greatly excel another, both in beauty, sagacity, and, if I may so say, even in good manners. Why therefore may not the same obtain amongst Men ? appearances are certainly for it : or why, otherwise, should the *Hottentots* and wild *Indians* have continued, from the first date of their existence to the present period, with so few marks of improvement amongst them ? It is not enough to say, that they shew themselves capable of learning things from us ; (for some even of the inferior

However, to speak ingenuously, it is rather our happiness, than it ought to be our pride,

ferior animals are capable of that, as far as their organization will allow them) but the question is, if they really have the same power of perfecting themselves; or, to use a new word, if they are indued with the same perfectionability, which we are; why have they not struck out of their own accord new discoveries; and advanced in improvement, as we have done?

It might be objected to this way of reasoning, that it seems to preclude the Christian Religion from ever attaining to that universality, which both from it's own nature, and from some not obscure prophecies, it was apparently designed to have. Now this objection would be removed by supposing that *our* species, which for distinction's sake may be called the *European*, shall in time possess the whole earth, to the intire exclusion of all the rest. And, if we may guess at consequences, from what has happened within these last two centuries, this will not appear a very absurd hypothesis. Neither is any great violence done to truth by supposing, that some species of beings, even of mankind, may become extinct. What is said both in Scripture and Pagan accounts, about Giants, makes it not improbable, that this has already been the case: and it is evident, that the number of wild beasts is greatly diminished; some whole kinds, such as *Wolves*, which appear to have been formerly the most numerous, scarce existing now, but in pictures and relations; and for specimens of others, we must send much farther, than heretofore was necessary.

It may be observed, as a consequence from hence, that if the slave-trade is to be defended at all, it must seemingly be on some such principles, as the above.

pride, that we excel former times in this article. It was the wisdom of God, and not of men, which brought this to pass: we ought therefore to give God the praise. And yet, oddly as it may sound, it is not absurd in fact to suppose, that even a religion given by God himself, (perfect as it must have come from it's all-wise Author,) may receive, reference being had only to the minds of men, many new additions of beauty and excellence, by being better understood.*

I would not here be thought, to cast the least reflection on the primitive assertors of gospel truth. But surely they had better hearts, than heads. And one would rather praise them for their honest and upright intentions, than condemn in any respect men, to whom we owe so much. Without casting any blame upon them, it must be owned, that learning was declining apace; when Christianity was left to human means for it's support. It was not long afterwards, that

* Nothing seems clearer, than that many things even in this last revelation, were delivered in the manner they are, merely in compliance to the weakness of their ideas, to whom it was first made; which would have put on a very different appearance, had knowledge been in the same state of perfection then, which it is now.

that our Religion, with almost every thing else, was buried in the ruins of the *Roman* empire; where it lay hid in darkness for ages.

Whoever considers this, and reflects farther, how lately it has emerged from this obscurity; how still more lately it has been able to disentangle itself, in any degree, from that rust and rubbish, from those great errors and gross superstitions, which it had contracted in those dark cells, where it had been shut up; and which by length of time, were grown so close to it, that they seemed, and were long * thought to make a part of the Religion itself; whoever, I say, considers these things, will not be surprised, either that Christianity has not hitherto been better understood; or, that it is better understood now, than ever it was, since inspirati-

* It was indeed no easy task to separate the two, or to point out distinctly, where true and genuine Religion began, and where these ugly, adscititious envelopments ended. Perhaps to some it may seem, as if a part of these still hung round it, which a too great tenderness may have hitherto spared, lest by taking off a wen of a confirmed growth, the health of the body itself should be endangered. And certainly, if ever this should be attempted, the greatest skill and care will be necessary, to prevent all ill consequences.

on ceased; now, when men's understandings are more refined, and their researches into truth more enlarged, than ever they were before!

There are not wanting however some amongst us, who are for shortening these researches ; and tell us, it is enough without any thing farther, if we only know, that such a thing *is written* : in which opinion, it may be worth while to observe, they seem to differ a good deal from St. *Philip* ; who, upon seeing a person with a Bible in his hand, was not content with merely asking him, what he saw written there ; but made this farther inquiry, “Understandest thou what thou readest ?” And how this business of *understanding* is to be accomplished, without the act of reasoning, without inquiring, by whom any thing was written ; on what occasion ; with what probable design ; how it agrees with other parts of Scripture ; and possibly also, how consonant it is to our own notions of God, and the relation we stand in to him ; is, I own, a point, far above my comprehension.

One would not suppose, that these men thought the Scripture false; but surely they talk, as if they did: for what harm can in-

quiries about it do, if it be true? it is the nature of all truth to love the light; of error, to avoid it. The one acquires fresh charms by being more clearly seen; and the ugliness of the other can no otherwise be fully detected, than by being brought into public view.

They would do well too to tell us, before they take the use of our reason away, what difference there is, between a false Religion and a true one falsely understood. Let them go to the banks of the *Nile*, and there find out the distinct worth of the *Copti*, and their neighbour the *Mussulman*.*

Or if they do not like to go so far abroad for instances, let them look into some of our modern assemblies of the faithful at home, and point out to us, the specific difference of enthusiasm and superstition, when built upon Christianity, and the same, when arising out of any other mode of worship.

* See an account of the old Serpent, and many other curious Anecdotes about them, in *Norden's Travels*, Vol. 2.

CONCLUSION.

IF the above considerations are so fortunate, as to evince the point, for which they were thrown together; and should make it seem probable, that there has been almost a continual improvement in human Knowledge; they may possibly at the same time suggest a suspicion, that we ourselves, whatever high attainments we may boast, shall be far outdone by those, who come after. But let not this damp our eagerness to get as near perfection, as we can; let it rather animate us, with fresh zeal, to leave a few things unfinished, for posterity to excel us in, as may be.

The End of the Second Part.

CONCLUDING

part of our knowledge, which we
silly not iniquit, or vice, as we
blame him; and that now it grows
few and fewer each, following after
natural in imitation.

ERRATA.

Page x. of the APOLOGY, &c. line the last; for their,
read it's.

Page xi. D°. line the 7th; after "don't, delete the com-
ma, or the word "act."

Page viii. of the EXPLANATION, &c. line last but
one; for "or least, read "or at least."

Page 84. in the Note, line 22; for "in-, read inferior."

Page 99. line the 10th; for philology, read philosophy.

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A NEW
ESTIMATE
OF
MANNERS and PRINCIPLES:
Or a COMPARISON between
Ancient and Modern TIMES,
In the three Great Articles
OF
Knowledge, Happiness, and Virtue.

PART III.
OF HAPPINESS;
IN WHICH
Some Principles of Mr. ROUSSEAU
are examined.

*Nescit sane illiteratus, quid sit in se descendere, aut secum
inire rationes; aut quam suavis sit vita, quæ indies sentit
se fieri meliorem.* Lord BACON.

C A M B R I D G E,

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M.DCC.LXI.

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The

TO
ROBERT SHAFTO Esq;

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

FOR THE
COUNTY OF DURHAM,

This THIRD PART

IS

Most Humbly Inscribed,

AS

A TESTIMONY

OF

The Author's Gratitude and Respect.

OT

THE OTHERS

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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AN
A P O L O G Y
TO THE
R E A D E R.

SIR,

OMIT the terms *kind*, *courteous*, *benevolent*, &c. for fear of mistakes. — But as I find there was some small *misperception* between you and me the last time I waited upon you, I think it worth endeavouring, at all hazards, to set things a little to rights, before I run the risque of making them worse by any fresh offence.

What a comfort would it have been, in such an extensive undertaking as mine, to have looked back here, and found, that “*for all was well!*” Since I cannot have this pleasure, at least in so full a manner, as I would wish, what can I do better, than try to excuse or defend in some degree my past conduct? For I cannot bring my mind to think, that a mere disappointment is reason

enough to make one either change one's opinion, or by an *explanatory defence* retract the greatest part of what one had before been studiously advancing.

I am told then, Sir, " that you think I did not treat you with civility and respect enough in my last visit ;" and that considering the novelty of some notions I advanced, there was a degree of peremptoriness in my manner, which tended more to disgust, than to allure you into my way of thinking. In answer to this, I plead, that though I would not be wanting in any instance of proper respect to a personage of your importance, yet I must at the same time own, that it does not enter into my plan to coax and wheedle. — I have the same opinion of truth that the old philosopher had of virtue, — strip but off that false dress, which her enemies have forced her to wear ; remove only that veil of error, which intercepts so many of her native beauties from the eye ; and all men must fall in love with her.

If however I set about this nice undertaking in too rough a manner : — If I asserted with too much freedom the right of private judgement, — it is a mistake, which little farther commerce with the world will probably

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probably correct. And I should hope, if you vouchsafe to honor me with any farther acquaintance, you may be induced to abate somewhat of your prejudice against me, upon finding that I am only a *plain-spoken man*. I must own I do not like that round-about way of introducing one's sentiments with an " If I may be allowed to give you my opinion ;" " pardon the expression ;" " I submit intirely to better judgements ;" &c. Though when I venture to tell you in a much plainer manner what I think, I really mean only just the same thing : " these are my sentiments ; you have your own ; make use of which you like best." If this be not enough to secure me from the imputation of rudeness or want of address ; as I would by all reasonable compliance with your humor endeavour to make you my friend, though I know your delicate and fastidious ear would nauseate any thing like flattery, I desire you would understand every sentence in my book with a " pace tuâ dixerim *," or
any

* I would not have used this Latin sentence, for a reason you will see by and by, if I had not thought, that by it's *classical authority* it would have greater weight with you, than any thing I could possibly say in *plain English*.

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any other still more submissive mode of acknowledging your indisputable right as a reader to judge much more properly, than I as an author can possibly be supposed to do.

So much for this affair.—I am charged in the next place, I hear, with a fault almost the opposite of this last; “that I have treated you with too much respect;” and have supposed you a person of much more reading and reflexion, than you really are: in consequence of which I have passed over many things too lightly; giving only just a hint or allusion to books and passages, where farther information might be had, or which, if pursued even with the smallest application of your own reason, would lead you by very easy steps to the intended conclusion: whereas, it seems, I ought to have done all this work for you. Now, Sir, I must beg your leave to observe in my defence here, that your's is a very numerous family, in which there must necessarily be a great variety of tempers, and consequently a great difference of opinions. There are some of you, that I have met with; who like nothing so well as the pleasure of the chace, and require only just to have the game put up for you, which you would of choice pursue by the help of your

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your own sagacity through all its various turns and windings. Others amongst you, with a more Alderman-like taste, would have every thing ready provided, dressed and served up; whilst they should have nothing more to do, than merely to sit down to eat and carve, where they liked best. — As I have never heard your sentiments directly upon this occasion, what I have above mentioned being only hinted to me by others; I have a mind for once to venture at supposing you to be one of the first sort, a man of great sense and good understanding; — if you are, the excuse I have to make to you on this head need only be a short one: — I have endeavoured as much as possible to avoid running down a sentiment; and have only aimed at inviting you to direct your own reading and observation to the same point of view with mine. — To gain which end, what likelier method could I take, than just to throw out occasionally a distant allusion, simile, &c. which by leaving room for the exercise of your imagination, might gently draw you into the path of inquiry, which it pointed out? As for your brethren of the other class, it matters not much, how one writes for them. Perhaps the properest way of treating them

them is to deal as much as may be in round assertions:— These, if any thing, will put them upon a necessity of thinking a little for themselves ;— and a thousand arguments to those, who either will not or cannot examine their force, are nothing more, than so many longer and more *tedious* assertions.

Besides, if an author may at all be allowed to have any regard to *self*, I might plead, that having entered upon a very extensive subject, with abundance of materials before me, it was labor enough to tire one of no very persevering turn of mind at best, to select some leading principles, marshal them in some order, and just say a few plausible things upon each to make them appear not altogether improbable.— By taking more leisure to have considered things, I might no doubt have adjusted my plan better, and have sent it out in a more finished manner; but the time when I set about it, seemed to require something of this kind immediately; and if I have only succeeded so far, as to dispose a few sensible Readers to bestow their impartial thoughts on this question, while it is in agitation; I shall think I have done more good, than I possibly could by sending out a more correct work at the distance of

ten years hence; which would not have been at all too long a space for entering fully into a subject of such large extent.

Another fault, near a-kin to this last, and which therefore may be obviated by a similar excuse, I find has been objected to me, "that I have not gone deep enough into the subject, have not tried, as the French term it, *approfondir la matiere*."—Now, though I would not be thought intirely incapable of penetrating a little farther into many points, than I have done; yet I must beg leave to observe, that at present I did not affect it, and professed only to treat things superficially; assuming the character of one of those *light Troops*, whose business is rather to reconnoitre and skirmish, than to bear any considerable share in more regular operations. If indeed their skirmishing should bring on any more serious affair, they should be supported by the firmer and more disciplined battalion. Whether it was in my power to have brought any such forces into the field, had their aid been required, cannot certainly be known, as I have not been put to the trial. I must own however, as it frequently happens to people at sea, that, what upon slight observation, or at a distance, appears only to be a cloud or thick

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mist, upon a nearer approach is found to be real land; I was in hopes it might also in some instances have happened to what I had written, that some things, seemingly of a very light and superficial cast, might, on being more stedfastly looked at, be found to contain more real matter, than at first sight they seemed even to pretend to.

But how shall I support myself against the next charge; in which I must expect to have every *Muse* for an accuser, and perhaps *Apollo*, or one of his sons, for my judge? — For I have committed it seems, the highest crimes and misdemeanours against their peculiar favorites the *Classics*, and have even been guilty of treason against the *Prince of Poets*! to whose imperial authority, it has been long agreed, every one who pretends to the character of a *Scholar*, must swear all true fidelity, and pay an unlimited obedience!

— I can almost fancy, that I hear Mr. *Morose* the Critic reading my indictment; “Whereas you — — — &c. not having the fear of certain heathen Gods and Goddesses before your eyes, have prophaneley and impiously dared, with malice aforethought, and at the suggestion of the D—, to insinuate that there are any imperfections or mistakes in

the ancient *orators*, *poets* or *philosophers*; and by force of arms them the aforesaid *poets*, *orators*, and *philosophers*, in an unheard of manner, have endeavoured wickedly to dispossess of that fame, which they have now been in quiet possession of for ages, &c. &c. &c." — It is really too terrible even in apprehension to stand this! I must undoubtedly sink under the weight of so heavy an accusation. O that *Minerva*, or you Sir, would be kind enough to whisper a word or two of advice in my ear, to offer in arrest of judgement! — What do you say? — would you have me plead, that I am no *scholar*, and consequently not subject to the jurisdiction of the Court? That indeed has an appearance with it. — Or suppose I should demur; and appeal to the bar of Reason. — Things, they say, are very exactly weighed there; and even with such a cause, in such a court, I should not, I think, have the least doubt of a favorable issue: — but I wave all these pleas; and, desperate as may seem, I'll e'en abide where I am, and endeavour to defend myself, as well as I can, by the example of those, whose memory I am accused of injuring.

Græcam urbem non possum ferre Quirites —
one of their old Poets with a laudable
indig-

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indignation. — Why may not I, though no Poet, be allowed to express some degree of dissatisfaction at a *City*, that is both *Greek* and *Latin*? Who can patiently bear to see people studiously going back two thousand years in search of that perfection, which lies so plainly still before them? — To see men of sense and learning spending their whole time and attention about *Æolic Digammas*, the *use of Accents*, or the *meaning of a passage in Horace*; whilst at the same time they are suffering the finest natural language in the world, their own, to lie intirely uncultivated, unless by the occasional and laudable efforts of some private individual? Had the same been the practice of the Greeks and Romans; had they studied nothing but Egyptian hieroglyphics, we might have been obliged at this day to have travelled to the pyramids to read the classics, whilst all the letters in the world would have been nothing more than the ill imitated forms of men, of other animals, implements, &c. If we think *they* did right in doing otherwise, and admire the polished languages, which they have transmitted to us, — Why do not we imitate their example? What possible reason can be shewn, why *English*, if it be not so already, might

not be made by the same care and pains as good a language, as either the *Greek* or *Latin*? And what argument can be used to shew, that they, or at least the Romans, did wisely in taking such pains to cultivate their language, which would not equally prove, that it would be as laudable an undertaking in us to do the same with our's. Superior to them in every other instance, why must we be beholden to them for the means of transmitting the memory of our deeds down to posterity? Yet this we seem fully determined to be. Or why otherwise, instead of using our endeavours to prevent this disgrace, have we taken pains the other way; why have we done all we could to promote it?

— Not a coin or medal must be struck in *English*; not an Epitaph or inscription must be wrote in *English*; as if we had a mind to intimate to all the world, that a few years hence, we suspected, our language, like those of other barbarous nations, will be no more! Whilst only the civilized *Greek* and *Latin* shall remain arguments of the polished and refined manners of those people! Who that has an English sentiment about him can bear this! How very different did the Romans act, never so much as quoting one

paf-

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passage in any other tongue but their own! Tully, we find, even thought it necessary, in his *Apology* for Archias the poet, to excuse his writing in Greek, lest that should be a circumstance, which might prejudice his hearers against him.

It would indeed much shorten the tedious road to knowledge, if we had but one language to learn, in order to gain a full acquaintance with what former ages knew. The attainment of various idioms and phrases takes up so much of a man's time, that it is not uncommon to see those, who pass for the greatest linguists, know little or nothing else. If this be the case at present, and by any future revolution in human affairs it should happen, that the modern *English*, *French* and *Italian* should be added to the number of dead and learned languages, how must one tremble for the fate of poor posterity! — Unless the present period of their lives were considerably lengthened, what chance would men have of becoming Scholars in such a situation? It would answer, besides, many valuable purposes to have but one form of speech through the whole world, one sort of current money, one kind of weights and measures, and perhaps we might

add,

add, one species of Government and of Religion. — It might be no bad policy then in our Ancestors, if they had any such scheme in view, to order Universities and all publick schools, as was the custom some years ago, to speak nothing but Latin. But as this Universality (if the present circumstances of the world will at all allow one even distantly to hope for such a thing) can never be brought about by a dead language, more especially Latin, (which we are either entirely ignorant how to pronounce, or it is the most stiff, harsh, inflexible language almost that ever was spoken, and the least suited to common intercourse;) — it would be well, if we could get rid of the absurdities, which the above practice has still left behind it, though now in general long disused.

Had one the address of Swift, or Addison, what a petition might one draw up in favor of our poor *Mother-Tongue*; setting forth the many hardships she has long endured, the various insults, and barbarous injuries she from time to time has suffered, and still is obliged to undergo, from the undutifulness of her own children! whilst every coxcomb, who sticks a pen in his wig behind a counter, if he has but barely learnt

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his *Accidence*, must have his *Items*, his *Omnium's*, his *N.B.'s* and his *Via Londini's*: — abbreviates his Pounds, Shillings, and Pence at the top of his accounts into L. S. D. — calculates his gains at so much *per cent.* — and signs his Receipts,

Per me Peter Stocks, Anno Dom. &c.

I know not, whether one might not join Madam *Lingua Latina* in the same petition; as it would be perhaps hard to say, which of the two had been worse used: but she being a foreigner, and into the bargain long since dead, cannot have so great a right to complain, nor be supposed capable of feeling her injuries so sensibly, as the other.

It might however be a matter of some nicety to determine, where one could properly prefer such a petition. — When one is thinking of a redress of grievances, the first thing, that offers itself to one's thoughts, is the P———t. Where should any thing, that is English, apply for relief so soon, as to that great council of the nation, which has for ages been justly looked upon as the grand bulwark of all that is dear to Englishmen? But, alas! in the present case, the very vote, that should be passed in our favor, would in all likelihood be a new griev-

* Esti-

ance

ance; as we should possibly see the honest English resolution dated *Die Mercurii Feb. 10^{mo.}* and concluded with a *Nemine Contradicente!*

As it is a matter seemingly relative to Learning, the Universities naturally present themselves next to our view. But as poor Old English is not reckoned there one of the learned *Languages*; that is, it is not ornamented with a parcel of *points, dashes, circumflexes, &c.* is not difficult enough to require a Professor to explain, nor eighteen years study to be tolerably understood; I am afraid any petition in it's favor would meet but with a cold reception in a place, where it is not thought good enough to say grace to their meat in!

As little prospect of success should we have, I doubt, were we to apply to our public schools for relief!

Pardon me, O Eton and Westminster, ye sacred seats of ancient Learning! Ye, whose wise institutions have lately been* proposed as patterns for our Universities to imitate! I do not mean to find the least fault with your admired plans of Education.—Ye were exceedingly well calculated two hun-

* Estimate, Vol. 2. p. 66.

dred years ago, to do all the good, that could be expected from you. — Yet I cannot help supposing, that if you were to follow the example of your favorite Romans, you would make some small alterations in your method. Give me leave to lay before you the sentiments of one of them upon this head, with whose writings you are, I dare say, intimately acquainted, though you may not perhaps have attended particularly to this passage.

“ *A sermone Græco puerum incipere malo: quia Latinus, qui pluribus in usu est, vel nobis nolentibus se perhibet: simul quia disciplinis quoque Græcis prius instituendus est, unde et nostræ fluxerunt: non tamen hoc adeo superstitione fieri velim, ut diu tantum loquatur Græcè, aut discat, sicut plerisque moris est. Hinc enim accidunt et oris plurimæ vitia in peregrinum sonum corrupti, et sermonis: cui cum Græcæ figuræ assiduâ consuetudine hæserint, in diversâ quoque loquendi ratione pertinacissimè durant. Non longè itaque Latina subsequi debent, et cito pariter ire. Ita fiet, ut quum æquali curâ linguam utramque tueri cœperimus, neutra alteri officiat.* ” *Quinctil. Lib. I. Cap. 1.*

I do not mean to enter into the particulars of the above reasoning; but if the gene-

ral argument contained in it be a good one, "that it was right for the Romans to learn *Latin* and *Greek* at the same time, and with equal care", I should be glad to know, why it will not equally prove, that it would be as right in us to learn *English* along with *Greek* and *Latin*.

It cannot surely be said, that there are no books in *English* fit for boys to read; neither can it reasonably be doubted, I should think, but that it is to the full as necessary for young minds to be early impressed with the precepts of the Christian Religion, and the principles of its different professors, as it can possibly be for them to be made acquainted with the absurd systems of paganism, or the maxims and opinions of old heathen philosophers. And would not this end be better answered by the more general reading of the works of some of our best Divines, under the direction of a skillful master, who could point out their beauties to them, than it can possibly be by any catechism or form of prayer, which they are usually obliged much against their will to get by heart?—Might it not also with some shew of reason be urged, that it would be full as useful for Englishmen to be acquaint-

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ed with the constitution and history of their own nation, as with those of either Rome or Greece? And might not this acquaintance be more easily procured from Mr. Hurd's *Dialogues*, than from any in *Plato*?—Nay more; if it be judged absolutely necessary for boys to learn a set of songs, replete with jollity and tender sentiments; that convey to the mind the most favorable ideas of Love and Wine; I know not, whether they might not meet with some English masters as complete even in this branch of science, as either Horace or Ovid, excepting in one particular of too great delicacy, thanks to our purer manners, to be mentioned to a British ear! They might too perhaps learn the art of managing an intrigue, and *bumming old Square-Toes*, from some modern plays as effectually, as from any ancient *Davus*, or *Pythias* “emuncto lucrata Simone talentum.” However, I mean not to exclude these from their share in this important business; I would only contend, that some attention should be paid to our own language in our Education; that those, who cannot learn the others, (which is the case of more than nine in ten, at least to read them with any tolerable pleasure, or critical skill,) may have a chance of acquiring a little

common cause,

common sense, and not intirely throw away eighteen years of their life in the poor attainment of a few latin scraps, which only good luck will enable them to quote properly, after they have got them.

As things are managed at present, many, who come to the University with the character of prodigious *School-Scholars*, are so totally above knowing any thing of their own tongue, that whatever figure they may make in their Latin Epistles for a Scholarship, it is ten to one, that their sister, with the miserable education of a Boarding-School, will be able to write a much better letter to their parents at home, than they with all their learning can do.

And as most University exercises are to be performed in the learned Languages, from whose sacred sources all instances and examples too must be drawn; will it not follow, that many will leave this place to go into the world, fitter citizens for Rome or Athens, than for the Metropolis of their own Kingdom; and will know ten times as much about Cæsar or Alexander, as they do about King William or Queen Elizabeth? Might we not ascribe some part of that taciturnity, for which the English are so remarkable, to this cause, that they really have no language to

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speak in, being absolutely foreigners in their own country, whilst the learned part of them in general would be much better able to hold a conversation with a German Commentator, than make a speech before an Audience of their own countrymen?

This however is by no means the worst consequence, attending such a plan of instruction. If there be any truth in the common complaint, that the interests of morality have lately been declining in the world; to what cause can we so properly ascribe such a decay, as to the little care, that is taken, in our education, to teach us our duty? In early days, mankind had little else to study but a few maxims of life, or rules of conduct; which from their fewness and simplicity it was easy both to learn and to practice. When Arts and Sciences began to spread through a larger circle, as they did in Greece, still people could learn the whole *Encyclopædia* in their own language. And even at Rome, when they set about studying *Greek*, as it was then a living language, spoken in a neighbouring country, they could have little more trouble in learning it, than we have in learning *French*. It was reserved for modern times to have two or three *dead languages* to learn.

So that during the greatest part of that time, in which the ancients were teaching their children to be *citizens*, we are teaching ours to be little better than *parrots*. For though it must be owned, there are many good maxims and much useful knowledge, amidst a great deal of a different kind, to be met with both in *Greek* and *Latin*; yet, whilst the grand aim of boys is only to get them *to construe and parse*, as it is called, it cannot be supposed, that they will pay much attention either to their truth or usefulness. What very different effects must *Tully's Offices* have had in a school at Rome, from what they can possibly have in England or in France? Without affronting this illustrious Roman, or his admirers so far, as to say there is as much real knowledge contained in our English *Spectators*, one may safely venture to assert, that if two separate classes of boys were educated with equal care, one in *Tully's* works, the other in those of *Addison*; the latter would have acquired a great deal more proper knowledge for a British subject. And as the usual way of comparing one set of men with another, is to consider, who made the best members of those commonwealths to which they belonged, it may from hence be

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be seen, at what disadvantage we must enter into such a comparison with the Romans, who by being taught at school the principles of morality, and of the government, under which they were to live, in the best authors and historians of their own country, were qualified *ad capessendam Rem-publicam*, and to fill the highest offices in the state, by the time we have learnt to read *their poets*. And yet if we consider, what a deal of time even they threw away in learning to be Orators and Warriors ; that is, to head a mob at Rome, and to cut their fellow-creatures throats, or deprive them of their liberty elsewhere ; how vastly might we excel them, by making a proper use of this time, and of the advantages which we derive from the Christian religion, to teach our youth to become not only good *citizens*, but good *MEN* ! Whereas at present so great is our neglect in this instance, that at most schools, where they would be severely flogged for missing an exercise, boys are suffered to practice such cruelties both upon each other, and those animals which are unfortunate enough to fall in their way, as are sufficient to infect their minds with the worst dispositions, as long as they live.

If

If these observations be in any part true; and if a too great attention to ancient languages has been in some sort the cause of it; I may stand perhaps excused for attempting to lessen this attachment. To learn languages in order to come at that knowledge, which is shut up in them, is a right and a laudable undertaking. But to stop at language, as a science itself, as is too frequently done, is a poor business indeed! If any thing could justify it, or make it appear respectable, it would be the attempting to perfect our own by the knowledge of others. And this might in some degree be done, if our own had it's proper share assigned it in our education: by referring alternately from instances in Greek and Latin to English, and from thence back again, masters might teach boys much juster notions of Grammar, than are to be had from a parcel of mechanic rules, suited only to this or that particular language.

That a knowledge of *Latin* and *Greek* may be of service in some sciences I do not mean to deny; that it might have been of more than it has been in some, there seems little room to doubt. But they have now been so well understood for these last hundred and fifty years, that there is little reason to expect any new discoveries from them of

what

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what has hitherto laid hid, at least none of any great importance. Most books too of any worth in them have been translated; and translations will supply us with matters of fact or common sense, as well as originals. So that the only end of learning them at present is almost merely curiosity or entertainment; and let those, who can make a pleasure of it, by all means have it. All I contend for is, that, since it's use has in a great measure ceased, it should not be forced upon those, by a faulty plan of education, who can have no relish for it, and who, in the mean time, might have been making a considerable progress in real knowledge without it *.

If every practice, that is old, be therefore right, we might easily refer to a time, when all men, who pretended to be scholars, traveled into

* What is here said, is not meant to condemn the study of *the Classics*, but only to limit it a little. They, who could do it to any purpose, would always follow it without it's being made the business of every body.— We have no general institution for teaching the Mathematics; yet we have as many and as able mathematicians, as can well be desired. It would indeed be exceedingly hard to shew the necessity of teaching any thing, as a general science to all boys whatever, except that, which is never taught them as a science at all; I mean the knowledge of themselves and of their duty.

into Egypt: and after that, to Athens. Why do not they go there now? It might as easily be shewn, that no alteration had happened in these celebrated seats of ancient learning, as that none had happened in the circumstances of the world, since the present plan of education was established. I am aware however, that the usual answer to all schemes of improvement is, that we should leave these matters to those, who are immediately concerned in them; who by the bye are commonly so well satisfied with the present system, as to be the last men in the world, from whom one may reasonably expect any alteration. There is indeed another much better answer than this, “That we go on very well in the present method;” which no doubt every one must be glad to observe:—but at the same time there cannot surely be any harm in wishing to see things better; and this is all, that I would be understood to mean.

Perhaps it may be said, that if there really be any thing amiss in this matter, it is an evil which time of itself will cure. And I am willing to hope indeed, if men have any foundation at all for their outcry about the decline of *learning*, it has arisen only from a suspicion, that the *learned languages* are not so much attended to, as they used to be.

If

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If time however be really taking away a little from this part of our education, we ought at least to supply it's absence by the substitution of something else in it's room.

As to those few occasional strictures, which I threw out against Homer and some others of the Ancients, I did not mean to propose them as complete arguments for the truth of what I was advancing; but I was in hopes they might have stimulated some of their doughty champions to enter into a closer examination of their merits, than is commonly made. By that partial method of admiring their striking beauties conveyed down, now for ages, from master to scholar by nodding head and waving hand, whilst every thing of a different kind is passed over without notice; how can we ever know their proper value? If the same thing, which is called a fault, a blemish, or even nonsense and absurdity in *English*, be honored in *Latin* and *Greek* with the title of an *Hypallage*, a *Catachresis*, or of some other fine figure, how should people ever form a fair judgement?— Is it not from hence, that *my good friends* the Critics (by the bye, if this does not succeed in the direct sense, I desire it may be understood as a *catachresis*, an ironice *dictum*, or

some

some such beautiful *trope*) look upon it as the highest commendation they can pay to those modern authors, whom they deign to think a little better of than common, to say, that they have happily followed, in their compositions, those perfect models, the Ancients? * Whereas the truth is, we have hardly any thing worth reading, except a little poetry, which bears any resemblance at all to them, beyond a few names, either in the matter or in the manner. Whose models in the name of common sense, did NEWTON, LOCKE, or MONTESQUIEU follow? Upon whose plan did BACON build? What ancient did SHAKESPEAR imitate? Or whom amongst them all, though he was their professed admirer, did ADDISON take for his pattern, when he wrote his SPECTATORS?

Nay,

* It is pleasant enough to find people excusing the want of delicacy, and such other little faults, as they allow the ancients to have, by the *Times* in which they wrote; and yet fancying, that those times far exceeded our's in every instance whatever. Happy Prejudice, with how little reason art thou satisfied!

— I would beg leave to observe here, that it is no proof in favor of the ancients, that those who have not read their works, do not write correctly even in their own language; because such people have commonly no opportunity of studying any language at all, at least scientifically; and it certainly is of some little use in writing to be acquainted with Grammar in some language or other.

Nay, as if nothing could be good, though it came from heaven itself, which did not answer this test of perfection, some pains have been taken to prove, that even CHRIST and his APOSTLES were good and sound *Classics!* — It seems however, as if what I had said, with a design of bringing on a fairer examination into the merits of these ancients, had been either so little, or so much, as to defeat my intention; so little, as not to deserve any notice; or so much, as answered itself by shewing, it was too much to be true. Some other method then must probably be tried to set these matters in a better light.

My motive for having affected to mix a little ridicule with these strictures, had it's rise principally from considering, what use the wits of the last age had made of this weapon against a kind of predecessor of mine, the worthy *W. Wotton B.D.* at whose expence many a one has laughed, who never read his works. I had a mind therefore to shew, that there was some room for laughing even on the other side. How successfully I might manage this point, I know not; I am sure however, I did it sparingly.

But it seems, there is such an air of levity running through the whole of what I have written, that both you and others have doubtless

ed, whether I was in jest or earnest; — I take this opportunity therefore to assure you all, that I was most seriously and heartily convinced of the general truth of what I was advancing; and it was owing intirely to my diffidence and fears of not being able to keep up a proper dignity throughout, that in particular places, where I most suspected the propriety of what I was saying, I endeavoured to make you smile a little; in hopes you might by that means be inclined to pass over, in a better humor, what otherwise wou'd perhaps have excited a frown from you. If this betrayed me into any unlucky combination of the serio-jocose at improper times, I can only say, it was not intended to give any offence; and I shall take particular care to avoid it for the future, even at the dangerous risque of being reckoned dull.

As to style; I believe I must own the charge, which is brought against me on this head; "that I have not in many instances raised the manner of expressing myself much above the pitch of common conversation."

The "sermoni propiora" do not indeed appear to me so faulty in prose, as they do in poetry. To my thinking, I must confess, it

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seems in general so much more natural to walk upon one's own feet, than either in stilts or buskins, that I must have done a violence to my own feelings to have given into that stalking method of delivering one's sentiments, so happily practiced by some, and so highly praised by others! Whatever advantages I might have derived from hence, I freely leave them all to the heroes of Tragedy; which the *great Critic* has long ago determined to be a business suited to this purpose, “ογκηρον φυσει και επιδεχομενον σομφον.” However, as these papers were thrown together originally in a different form from what they now appear in; and one cannot always persuade one's self to strip off that dress, which one's thoughts have once put on; you may perhaps in some places be inclined to think, there is too much of the spirit of declamation interspersed, to agree well with the sobriety of calm dissertation.

After having detained you so long, Sir, in making an APOLOGY to you, it would be needless to add, that I should have been extremely happy to have had no occasion for it. You cannot but see from hence, how very desirous I am of having your good opinion; — if however, after all I can say in

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my defence, I am still so unlucky, as not to make you think more favorably of me; though I may not perhaps be able to arrive at that enviable serenity of mind, which they were blessed with, who, according to the poet, were, "Quicquid scripsere, *beati*;" yet I will endeavour to be as little *unhappy*, as I can, whatever you may be pleased to think, either of me or my manner of writing.

I am, S I R,

and shall be,

according to the degree of civility,

with which you may condescend to treat me,

your humble,

very humble,

or most obedient humble

Servant,

March 18. 1761.

The AUTHOR.

MA

Some

A NEW
ESTIMATE
OF
MANNERS and PRINCIPLES.

PART III.

OF HAPPINESS;

IN WHICH

Some Principles of Mr. ROUSSEAU
are examined.

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A NEW
ESTIMATE
OF
MANNERS and PRINCIPLES.

PART III.

Of HAPPINESS.

CHAP. I.

Of the Connexion between Knowledge, Happiness, and Virtue.

IT was the busines of the preceding part of this Estimate to prove, “ That knowledge is in a state of much greater perfection now, than it formerly was.” It is the design of this to shew, “ That, in consequence of such an improvement, the state of man’s happiness also must have been considerably advanced.”

And surely, one should think, if the former part was at all satisfactorily made out, there cannot much difficulty remain in prov-

* A ing

ing the latter. Nay, if the first proposition was only so far evinced, as to make it seem probable, that at least those Branches * of Knowledge, which apparently have a more immediate influence upon the welfare of civil life, and man's comfortable subsistence in it, were improved; if it should appear

I say

* The Branches of Science here intended are principally Politics, Ethics, Religion, and Commerce.

As there may be many, to whom an improvement in the above particulars was not clearly enough shewn, in the few slight observations, which I ventured to lay before them in the former parts of this essay; I should hope at least, that they might be inclined to examine a little farther into the subjects themselves. And if they would only take the trouble of instituting a more accurate comparison, from their own reading, between the *Politics* of PLATO and ARISTOTLE on the one side, and those of SIDNEY, LOCKE, and MONTESQUIEU on the other.— they would collect as much of ancient *Ethics*, as they please, and then in balance to the information, which they would derive from thence, only throw into the opposite scale the *reasoning*, *good sense*, and *humanity* to be met with in the single short volume of WOLASTON'S *RELIGION OF NATURE*.— If they would turn over a few of the voluminous and ponderous WORKS of the FATHERS, and compare the notions which they would find there with such as might be extracted from some of the most able performances of our MODERN DIVINES, — they would soon, dare say, receive all the satisfaction in these matters which I could wish them to have. For as to *Commerce*, there cannot, I take it for granted, be the least dispute about it.

Manners and Principles. 3

I say, that we are wiser only in these instances, even allowing the Ancients to excel us in Eloquence and Poetry, who would hesitate in concluding, that we were happier than they? This indeed seems to follow of course, as a corollary, plainly deducible from a proposition already demonstrated.

For let it once be established as a truth, that the science of *Politics*, for example, is improved; who could want to be informed, that men would have a clearer insight into the rights, privileges, and interests of their species; and that by this means lawgivers would be better enabled to frame their different systems in such a manner, as should most effectually answer the end of all government, the general happiness of those who live under it? The just limits between power and obedience, would be more accurately placed out, and more precisely determined; the odious and dangerous quality of the one, would be lessened by a proper distribution of it into various channels; and the irksomeness of the other would be abated and rendered less disagreeable, by a suitable mixture of liberty with it.

As little need surely can there be to prove, in any length of argument, that in propor-

tion as the grounds and principles of *Morality* were better explained, men would comprehend more fully the duties, which they owed both to themselves and others; for the discharge of which duties, *Religion*, in it's turn, as it was better understood, would furnish, if not stronger *, at least more rational and more proper obligations; whilst, by banishing absurd notions and idle apprehensions, it would render it's professors both better members of the community, and more friendly neighbours to each other.

In the last place, who must not see, that *Commerce*, as it became more extensive, would discover a greater variety of such arts and means as tend to better our condition; to improve our accommodations; and to raise the dignity and value of human life far above the standard of those times, when mankind had barely learnt to live, in a way little preferable to that, in which the beasts of the forest draw out their existence?

In short, the whole of this reasoning may be comprised in this single question; whe-

ther

* This exception is made, because it is perhaps possible for Enthusiasm and Superstition to propose to their votaries as strong motives for the observance of their absurd injunctions, as Truth itself can do to those, who live under it's better influence.

ther, as rational creatures, we shall not be likely to act more agreeably to that character, as our minds are better cultivated, and our reason more improved? which surely cannot be regarded as any very intricate inquiry, or one that can cost much study to resolve!

For if Happiness be the grand end and aim of all our wishes and endeavours; the more perfectly we know where it is to be found, and the more clearly we discover the paths, which lead to it; the more probable undoubtedly it is, unless there be something exceedingly perverse indeed in our fate, that we shall pursue our interest with a greater degree of steadiness and success.

And if our Reason was assigned us by nature for a guide, to lead us to our happiness; surely the more knowledge this guide acquires from observation and experience; the better able will he be to conduct us properly: and the more proofs and trials we have of his skill and abilities, the more ready shall we be to trust ourselves to his guidance.

Lastly, if the road, which this guide will point out to us, should be, as it certainly will be, the path of Virtue; how can it be otherwise, but that we should in such circumstances be more likely, than if we were

in doubt about it, to enter upon this path with chearfulness, and pursue it with perseverance to the end, however unpleasant or unpromising it may now and then appear in some more tedious stages of our journey ?

Since nothing more is asserted here, than a greater degree of probability ; it is not necessary, that we should see what is above laid down always taking place : such exceptions however to this rule, as particularly respect Virtue, must be considered hereafter. In the mean time we may just observe, that as man is endued with free-will, which is often hardy enough to assert it's privilege, and exercise it's power in direct contradiction to his reason, and in open violation of his happiness, it is possible that some, who are well acquainted with their duty in theory, may act in particular cases, as if they were the greatest strangers to it. And by such various humors are most of us possessed, arising both from the nature of our own complex frame and those fickle, fluctuating circumstances in which we are placed ; that many, who seem blessed with the fairest means of happiness may, by an almost unaccountable kind of whim and caprice, not only neglect to use

them

them, but even contrive to turn them into materials for uneasiness and misery.*

How-

* Besides the danger to be apprehended from these irregularities, threatening so much to disturb the good harmony, which I would willingly establish between Knowledge, Happiness and Virtue, (an alliance, could it be perfectly brought about, of greater consequence to the peace of the world, than any triple alliance that ever yet was formed !) — There are some, I am afraid, such too as would generally be thought to know the world, who only observing, how a man often makes his way in life, may be inclined to entertain very different notions of learning and good sense (which are besides not always to be found united) from those, which I could wish to have believed the true ones. It may not be amiss therefore to try, if we can free the present argument from any objection, likely to be brought against it from this quarter.

It would be a consideration highly alarming to the interests both of Knowledge and of Virtue, to think, that they did not, in their general tendency, promote our present advantage. But however common it may be to measure a man's happiness, and even his understanding, by what is called *success in the world*, yet one might fairly, I should think, dispute the justness of this standard.

Allowing Wealth and Honor to have all the real worth, which they, who are pursuing them, imagine them to have; yet who can say, that it might not greatly injure the happiness of a philosopher at least, who may be supposed to have many other things in view equally interesting to him, and to the full as essential to his happiness, deeply to engage in the pursuit of these? Might he not find it necessary, in the course of this pursuit, to pay so much attention to the hu-

However, if it be the natural tendency of improved science to make men happier and better; it is a warrantable conclusion to say, that

mors and foibles of others, that in the mean time he must neglect his own? If he should be further obliged to make himself so much their servant, as to cease in a great degree to be his own master; (in which the truest happiness most probably consists,) who could fairly reckon, whatever his success might be, that he was upon the whole a gainer?

Neither would it be a more equitable decision to conclude, he had less understanding than others, merely because he had been less successful, than they, in obtaining some worldly advantages; as these might be matters, to which he only occasionally bent his thoughts, whilst they were making them the constant objects of their study and attention. There are besides in the present circumstances of our Being certain subsidiary arts, of no little consequence in some instances to a man's advancement, which he might not trouble himself to learn; either because he thought them unworthy of his notice, or that his other stock of merit was so great, as would be sufficient of itself to recommend him, without their aid.

It is possible however, that those, who have the brightest parts, may not in some respects be so well calculated to make their way in the world, as others. For in the road either to wealth or honor, the swiftest coursers are by no means the best travellers. There is a certain, even, steady pace, which in these pursuits will bring us to our journey's end much more prosperously, than any occasional and sudden speed: and they, who have a high-mettled fancy to deal with, will not always have it enough under command to make it drudge on in the common road, and at the

that the effect in general, will be correspondent; though the imprudence or ill success of a few individuals should incline one to think,

the ordinary rate: carried away by the starts and sallies of such a wayward and unmanaged steed, they may sometimes be led even against their own best endeavours into untrodden and embarrassed paths; a circumstance, which must needs render their passage tedious and unpleasant, and throw them far behind those, who keep on in the beaten way; though by opening a new view of things, it may to after-comers be attended with many advantages.

One might reckon up too some other inconveniences attending men of abilities, which having their origin from the necessary imperfection of human nature are not likely soon to be remedied. To say nothing of those constant enemies to all excellence, the perverse children of malice or of envy; the fears of the weak, and the cunning of the crafty, both naturally dispose them to be suspicious: and they who have shewn some talents, will always be looked at by these with a degree of caution and jealousy, as persons who are hatching schemes, and harbouring intentions, beyond what is seen (for what will not suspicion fancy!) of a most dangerous and malignant tendency, highly detrimental to the common good, and likely to overthrow the fairest fabric of publick tranquillity! Hence they will not only be subject to much ill-grounded censure, which others of less eminence are free from; but they must also expect to meet with many obstacles purposely placed in every avenue, by which otherwise they might probably arrive at too high an estimation. Whilst every motion then of such men is cautiously watched by their enemies, and through their suggestions distantly suspected perhaps even by their

think, that they were neither happier nor better for their knowledge; especially as many of these supposed instances to the con-

trary,

their friends; it cannot but frequently happen, that many of much less pretensions, being suffered to pass by with a slighter observation, will obtain their end, even before it is suspected, they had any such design in view. But were these disagreeable considerations of much more importance, than they are, being in general only so many Lilliputian darts, which will rather annoy than wound a man of any constancy; I should make no doubt, but that the extensive view of things, which the true sons of science are blessed with, would bring in such a stock of perpetual pleasure, as would be enough to overbalance any occasional uneasiness or mortification, they might be liable to on this account.

As to that complaint, the usual offspring of disappointment, "that men in high stations do not regard merit in the distribution of their favours"; were it much better founded, than it commonly is, being little else in general but an instance of self-applause, over-rating the pretensions of those, who make it; might we not easily solve the occasion of it from principles entirely consistent both with the neglected worth of those, who are hurt by it, and the justice of those, whose mistaken conduct has given rise to it? Some unforeseen, and perhaps unaccountable coincidence of circumstances, which we for want of knowing more about them call accident, must unavoidably have a great share in determining the fortunes of particular men. The soldier, who in the attack of Quebec, followed a fortunate companion, who had discovered a way to climb the dangerous steep, might easily by his direction and assistance get up the difficult ascent; whilst many others of equal strength

trary, may arise merely from mistaken notions in those, who declare them such; who perhaps are only led to think of them, as they do, from their own false measures of what constitutes true knowledge, solid happiness, and real virtue.

strength and courage, by being landed in a less lucky spot, might be prevented from making the least approach. Besides, can we reasonably suppose, that the Great should be exempt from all partial affections, and that they should entertain no friendships? As well might we imagine, that they should cease to be men! And will not these naturally incline them to think more favourably of such as have always shewn an attachment to them, and who by being frequently with them have opportunities of recommending themselves, which others cannot have? How should they avoid then giving some sort of preference to these above others, even though more deserving, when they bestow those envied favours, which fortune has put in their power? Especially as their situation must almost necessarily prevent them from knowing many of those, whose merit, however eminent, may be placed at too great a distance for their notice! How should the lofty oak, surrounded by his tall fellows of the grove, discern the humble shrub, that grows in some distant vale, however it may be regarded either for it's use or worth within it's own narrow sphere? What wonder can it be, if sometimes the creeping ivy, however meanly it may be thought of, which accidentally lays hold of his stem, should by degrees wind itself into so close a connection with him, as to rise by his support into an eminence it never was designed for?

C H A P. II.

Mr. Rousseau's Opinion; with some Observations upon it, drawn from the seeming Designs of Nature, as expressed in the Constitution of Things.

IT has been asserted in the last chapter, that it was the natural tendency of improved science to make man's life happier and better; and the assertion seems to be justified not only by the reasons there offered in support of it, but also by the universal practice of all mankind; who have now, for some thousands of years, all of them made it their business, in some degree or other, to discover truth, and to teach it to others; hoping, we must suppose (or they have spent their labour to little purpose) not only to increase their own happiness, but also to make others *know*, as the likeliest means to make them *do*, their duty.

How greatly must it surprise one then at last, to hear, that this is only a plausible mistake; which men have fallen into, as they have into most others, for want of proper consideration! That the direct contrary of all this is the truth; and that had men

been

been their own friends, they would have pursued a quite opposite plan!

I do not say this however, because I think, that either plausibility, or authority, ought to give a sanction to errors. — Let new lights and better information be followed, whenever they appear. — But surely of all the causes, which might incline men to imagine, that the world was impaired in happiness and virtue, the last one should ever have expected to see urged, would have been the allowed improvements of knowledge: as if the only way to make men happy, was to deprive them of their senses; and the only method of teaching them to do their duty, was not to let them know, in what it consisted!

Yet such is the wit of man, that even this great discovery has been lately made: which, were it true, would almost be evidence enough of itself to overthrow the arguments of it's authors; so far superior is it to any thing our ancestors ever dreamt of! who, good men! weakly imagined, that these improvements were of some consequence to the world, and endeavoured therefore, as much as in them lay, to set them forward!

But

But so convinced have people been of the comparative badness of modern times; so determined do they seem to support the cause of former excellence; that those advantages, which they could not deny to later days, they have been cunning enough to convert into arguments against them.

So that to vindicate the superiority of the present over former ages, we must not only shew, "that we have made many and great improvements, beyond what was known heretofore;" but (which seems a little hard!) "we must also now defend these very improvements themselves;" — must shew, that they have not made the times worse, rather than better; — must prove in short (which, who should ever have expected to be called upon to prove!) that the means of happiness and virtue are not the means of vice and misery.

It was to little purpose then, that in the preceding part of this essay I endeavoured to shew, "that knowledge and the arts of life are in a state of much greater perfection now, than ever they were before." For to what end, may it well be asked, are we wiser, if we are not happier and better? How vain will our boasting be, if it should appear, that

that we have only increased our knowledge, to *increase our sorrow!* What will signify all our other improvements, granting them to be as great, as the warmest advocate for them can desire, if we have made no advances in that, which is of the greatest importance! If religion and virtue instead of producing daily better effects, lose ground, and cease to have that influence on our conduct which they not only ought, but formerly used to have! —

Had this supposition any good foundation, it must be owned our failing here would more than overbalance all our other acquisitions. We should be obliged with shame to confess, that we had purchased our improvements at too dear a rate. The loss of happiness and of virtue no gain can equal!

Let us proceed then in the next place to inquire, whether our advances in Science have been followed by like advances in Happiness and Virtue: or, if they have not, whether a failure in the latter instances can with any propriety be ascribed to a progress in the former, as a cause.

Happiness and Virtue are indeed, in the present circumstances of mankind, so intimately connected together; that the one is

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apparently but the *means* of attaining the other, which may be called it's *end*. It may therefore be thought a kind of violence to separate them; and more especially so, if we put the end before the means. However, as they do in our ideas at least exist independently of each other; and as in the order of those ideas Man seems to present himself first in the character of a *sensible* Being, endued with certain feelings, and capable of receiving happiness and misery from them; before we view him in the light of a moral agent—I shall, for the sake of avoiding embarrassment, consider only at present, how far Happiness is likely to be affected by the improvements of life; and afterwards examine, what may be the fate of Virtue on the same account.

To some perhaps any attempt to prove that we are happier, than our fathers were, may appear an odd undertaking: for the estimation of each man's happiness being seated in his own mind alone, it may seem to them, as if all we could do in this business would be to appeal to our own breast, and inquire there, whether we thought ourselves happier, than mankind were heretofore, or not.

There

There are however many objections against admitting this method of deciding the point. We are all of us apt to have either too good or too bad an opinion of ourselves and circumstances. Ask any one the question, and he will immediately answer, that his feelings in the suffering of misery are as acute, as any other's possibly can be; it is well if he does not add, more so: and he is as fully persuaded, that had he the means, he could also enjoy happiness as much, as any other. Yet if we judge either from the reason of the thing, or from observation on the different expressions of pain and pleasure, shewn by different men in similar circumstances, there cannot be any thing more evident, than that this is merely a piece of self-deception; however wisely it may be calculated, when under proper restrictions, to make us pleased and satisfied with ourselves.

We are as liable to be deceived in the estimate, which we make of our circumstances, by the short view of things, which we commonly take on such occasions. We see and feel the inconveniences of our own situation; we do not feel, and therefore but imperfectly perceive those, that attend our neighbours; how much less those, which

* B might

might attend one, who lived a thousand years ago? our own happiness too at the same time grows cheap in our estimation by use and inattention; that, which we fancy is to be found in a different state, has novelty at least to recommend it: struck with that charm, we easily banish every intruding thought, that might pretend to lessen its imagined worth.

Setting aside therefore so corrupt a determination, as that of our own partial minds would probably be in this case, let us appeal to a fairer and more equitable trial, — to the nature of things themselves; and enquire not whether we are in fact happier, than mankind formerly were, which we can never know;* but whether we ought not to be so

* And yet if we were even necessarily obliged to be guided, in forming our sentiments upon this article, merely by the accounts which people now and formerly have given us of their happiness; ancient times would not be such gainers in the comparison as might at first sight be imagined. "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been", we know was the complaint of one, who lived very far back in point of time, and who does not appear to have had any thing so very particular in his history but what might easily be supposed to have happened to numbers in the same way of life; and therefore we may reasonably conclude, that the same was the complaint of many besides him even in that golden age.

years as having more opportunities and a larger same share of the means of happiness afforded us, y use than they could possibly have.

is to And in order to begin this inquiry from
elty at the most simple principles; we can; let us
a that consider what the happiness of man must
uding be, antecedent to society; — before virtue
en its or its rules were ever thought of. However
deter difficult it may be to conceive such a state,
minds as ever actually existing; it is not at all so to
appeal imagine; what man's happiness must have
to the been in it: it must have been exactly such,
inquire as the brutes enjoy; an unlimited indulgence
, than of their appetites, 'as far as nature prompts
n never or opportunity will serve; without either
be so thought or care about any thing beyond
oliged to mere existence; undisturbed by any sense of
pon thi shame or dread of punishment; without all
now and hopes of pleasure or fear of pain beyond the
ancien present moment.

and ev The ingenious * *Rousseau*, whose abilities
een", w as a writer intitle him to the highest respect,
a very fa what-

age; though the particular matter of them, for want
appear of being registered, has never reached our ears. We
s history know however in fact, that the same or similar has
happened been the complaint of thousands in every age and
therefore very country, from that time to the present.

* In two treatises, one "Sur l'Origine et les Fondements de l'Inégalité parmi les Hommes" and the other

whatever be thought of his opinions, is fond of calling this the true state of nature; and with a subtlety, which pleases the fancy at

the

usually called his Prize Discourse, on this Question proposed by the Academy at Dijon, "Whether the Re-establishment of Arts and Sciences has contributed to purify our morals."

In the former describing man in a state of nature, he gives the following account of him "Son ame, que rien n'agit, se livre au seul sentiment de son existence actuelle sans aucune idée de l'avenir." "Les seul biens qu'il connoisse dans l'univers sont nourriture, une femme, et le repos." Speaking of the evils introduced by society, he says, "Voilà les funestes grands que la plupart de nos maux sont notre propre ouvrage, et que nous les aurions presque tous évités, en conservant la manière de vivre simple, uniforme, et solitaire, qui nous étoit prescrite par la nature." p. 22. In proof of which he afterwards adds, "La nature traite tous les animaux abandonnés à ses soins avec une préférence, qui semble montrer combien elle est jaloux de ce droit." He then gives instances of the superior strength and beauty of wild animals, compared with the same made tame and domestic:— and observes, "Il en est ainsi de l'homme même, en devenant sociable et esclave, il devient foible, craintif, rampant; et sa manière de vivre molle et effeminée achieve d'enervier à la fois sa force et son courage." With only this disadvantage to man in the comparison, "qu' entre les conditions sauvage et domestique la différence d' homme à homme doit être plus grande encore, que celle de bête à bête; car l' animal et l' homme ayant été traités également par la nature, toutes les commodités que l' homme donne de plus qu' aux animaux qu' il apprivoise

son

the time that it misleads the judgement, attempts to shew, that the farther our improvements carry us from this original state, they do in proportion the greater violence to our natural constitution; and carry us the farther from a state of ease and happiness. — Ingenious deduction! by which it would appear, that an Idiot or a Changeling is happier, than the Scholar or Philosopher; — the wild Indian or Hottentot, a more enviable Being, than an Englishman or a Christian!

What serious † answer can be given to such

ont autant de causes particulières, qui le font dégénérer plus sensiblement.” p. 26.

N. B. Whenever hereafter the quotation from these treatises shall be in English, it will be taken from the Prize Discourse; when in French from the other.

† If Mr. *Rousseau* had not given abundant proofs that he was in earnest; one should have been apt to conclude, that he had written only in banter, with some such design, as an ingenious author amongst ourselves is supposed to have had in view, when he wrote his essay against artificial society; and sent it into the world as a posthumous work of a noble writer, who was much more celebrated for the strength of his imagination, than for soundness of judgement, closeness of reasoning. — It was the drift of this spirited essay to expose artificial society, by setting before our view all the evils it had introduced, drawn in caricature, and concealing its advantages: — a species of reasoning like what his would be, who would undertake to give us a complete idea of a

such a whimsical abuse of all rational inquiry? — the author of this philosophical paradox had nothing more to do, than to have shewn us the *reasonableness* and advantages of running mad; — to have pointed out to us the most easy and expeditious method of losing our senses; and his plan would have been complete! He is fond of quoting instances, and he might have found one at least full to his purpose, even on this head; the happy Madman, I mean, who declared to his friends, that they had ruined his ease by restoring him to his reason!

— pol me occidistis, amici,
Non servastis, ait, cui sic extorta *voluptas*,
Et demptus per vim *mentis gratissimus Error*.

And certainly, if it be true, that the improvements of reason do indeed so much injury to our ease! the Being is happiest, that is without this dangerous principle! which is ever in

horse by reckoning up all the blemishes and distempers to which that noble animal is subject; and then telling us that a horse was a collection of splint, spavin, wind-gall, glanders, farcy, staggers, &c. adding withal a few significant notes of admiration! and concluding with a “caveat emptor,” a wholesome piece of advice, and a stricture or two upon the weakness of human reason, which could suffer any body to buy or ride such an animal, who, if he did not break your neck, must infallibly ruin your purse!

viting us to improve it; that is, ever solliciting us to make ourselves miserable.*

Let us drop then this boasted prerogative; by which we assert our right of dominion over other created Beings: — let us step from the seat of empire, that brings upon us so much care! — our subjects are happier, than we are! — the beasts of the forest; the most despised vermin; nay, the tree that betrays no symptom of thought, enjoys a far more enviable lot, than we do! Our boasted' science tends but to perplex; we have found out the art indeed to multiply our wants, but not the means to gratify them; we have employed our wit only to contrive new fetters for the will; have been curious to devise rules to rob us of our ease; and have sa-
crificed

* One may easily agree with Mr. *Rousseau* in this — “ Il feroit triste pour nous d’ être forcés de convenir que cette faculté distinctive et presque illimitée, est la source de tous les malheurs de l’homme; que c’ est elle, qui le tire, à force de tems, de cette condition originaire, dans laquelle il couleroit des jours tranquilles, et innocens; que c’ est elle, qui faisant éclore avec les siècles ses lumières, et ses erreurs, ses vices, et ses vertus, le rend à la longue le tyran de lui même, et de la nature.” p. 34.

“ J’ose presque assurer, que l’ état de reflexion est une état contre nature, et que l’ homme qui medite, est un animal depravé.” p. 22.

crifcified the inestimable blessing of liberty, to the ² imaginary good of government; government, which makes us dearly pay for every scanty pittance of that liberty, which it deigns to return us, who were once in full possession of it all! ³ — Let us then at once break our chains; strip off these useleſſ habiliments; return to our native woods; mix with our brother brutes; and feed a gain on mast and acorns!

It might be supposed, from the conclusion of the last paragraph, that I was representing the imaginary sentiments of some unfortunate wild beast, which had unhappily fallen into the toils of the hunter, and was now bewailing his captivity, restrained to the narrow limits of a den, and ſubjeſt to the harsh controul of an angry keeper. The wood-bred Savage, [†] of near affinity to his fellow burghers, might possibly avow the

fame,

² “ A’ acheter un repos en ideé, au prix d’ une felicité reelle.” p. 4.

³ “ Une ſituation plus heureufe de n’ avoir ni mal à craindre ni bien à esperer de personne, que s’ être ſoumis à une dépendance universelle, et de s’ obliger à tout recevoir de ceux, qui ne s’ obligent à leur rien donner.” p. 65.

[†] “ Il retourne chez ſes Egaux”. Motto to Mr. Rousseau’s Frontispiece.

same, if dragged into society and taught it's manners:—"the sow, that was washed might return to her wallowing in the mire". It is impossible to say what effects the brutal part of our nature may have, when there is but a small degree of reason to withstand it, which is frequently strong enough to subdue even the most vigorous and enlightened understanding.

But it still remains a difficulty to think, how a *Citizen** and a Philosopher could so far forget the obligations he was under to society and it's institutions, as to embrace and defend such principles. Must he not mean, that God made us at first with only instinct † to direct us; or of such a circumscribed

* One too, who seems proud of the name, as it is that, by which he has chose to distinguish himself in the Title-page of his prize Discourse, written, as he informs us,

By a CITIZEN of Geneva.

— The country in the world, where according to Machiavel, "The people at this day live, either to their ecclesiastical or military discipline, according to the model of the Ancients," of whom Mr. Rousseau every now and then, at least comparatively, seems to entertain a very high opinion.

† He tells us indeed in so many words, that "l'homme sauvage livré par la nature au seul instinct, &c." Yet this very instinct would probably have carried him much beyond what Mr. Rousseau calls

scribed capacity, as the beasts enjoy; free from this mischievous power of reason, this grand disturber of our peace; which has been merely the creature of our own depraved minds, an attribute of our own forming? For otherwise all his fine declamation against it will fall back upon the giver of this dangerous or useless faculty; and will dwindle into the common childish arraignment of God's wisdom for having made us thus.

What might have been man's situation, had he never tasted the fruit of that forbidden tree of Knowledge, might be difficult to determine; it is not easy perhaps to say, what is precisely meant by it. But of this one may be sure, that man might with as little absurdity be supposed to have been the author of his whole existence, as of his reason*. And we may be farther satisfied, that

calls a state of nature; might have taught him perhaps to herd with his fellow savages, and to build huts at least, as well as birds and beavers do. And in fact no people have ever yet been discovered so barbarous and ignorant, as to have made no improvements. All have their bows and arrows to kill their prey or their enemy; and a knife to carve and scalp with, when they have done.

* Yet Mr. Rousseau seems to have been of this opinion. "It is a great and glorious spectacle (says he, p. 3.) to see man, as it were rising out of No-

if the all-wise Author of our Being bestowed this gift upon us, he neither gave it to make us miserable, nor to *rust in us unus'd*. If we used it, however difficult it may be to trace out many of the first steps, that led to knowledge; by what happy discovery some principles were found out, and by what lucky connexions and combinations they were afterwards carried on to further perfection: however slow their advances, on this and many other accounts, may have been, it is plain, that things in course of time not only must have been, what matter of fact shews they are; but also that God must intend this.

To what purpose else were the many latent qualities and properties of things given? For what end were roots and plants induced with healing juices? Or for what use would the mine contain it's ore, and the earth it's hid

THING by his own proper efforts; dissipating the darkness, in which NATURE had involved him, by the *light of his reason*; elevating himself above his sphere; &c." — Though how *nature* can be said to have involved man in *darkness*, if at the same time she gave him the *light of reason* to direct him, must be left to Mr. Rousseau, I believe, to determine. It is to be wished too, that he had made it a little plainer to common capacities, how it is, that man can be looked upon as elevating himself above his sphere, if he is only using those powers, which nature induced him with.

hid treasures? — With what design could the mind be furnished with a power of acquiring, comparing, and reflecting upon it's ideas? But that those qualities and those properties were intended as fit and useful materials for the study and employment of these powers and these faculties?* What a striking harmony and beauty too does there appear in this! How can we be unhappy in a state to which our wise Creator has so peculiarly adapted us? How can we be said to be in a wrong pursuit, when we are only attempting to know, what seems thrown in our way on purpose to be known? How can we be miserable for endeavouring to acquaint ourselves with nature, and to find out fresh matter for admiring and adoring nature's God?

One might almost grow enthusiastic with such questions as these! — Was the starry vault of heaven, think ye, thrown around us, to raise in us no more regard, than what the beasts pay to it? Were we either to ne-
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* “ The mind has it's wants, (says Mr. Rousseau, p. 5.) as well as the body.” — If so, has it not at least as good a claim, as the other, to our care and attention in providing for it's wants, and supplying it's demands?

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glect it's wondrous appearances *, or through ignorance and superstition tremble at their baneful influence, and sculk behind our bushes with a fear-taught reverence? Was the chief, best handy-work of God made capable of, and designed for, no higher office, than to eat, drink, and sleep? Must he give up the glorious hopes of immortality? Must he not only *die* like the beasts, that perish; but must he *live* like them also? Does he necessarily quit his happiness, whenever he indulges thought and reflexion? Are there no pleasures of the imagination? Will sober contemplation, and the discovery of truth, yield no joy? In what then must the happiness of purer beings consist? In what must our own consist, if we are to be happy, after we have put off this grosser body?— However to end at last this stretched-out string of interrogatories, one may surely assert, that the nearer we approach towards the perfection of our nature, the happier we must needs be. At least because men cannot be angels, it does not follow, that the next best situation for them is to be brutes: or because they cannot attain pure

* Which seems to be Mr. Rousseau's opinion. Speaking of his favorite savage, he says, "le spectacle de la nature lui devient indifférent." p. 38.

pure happiness, that therefore they should despise and quarrel with that mixt degree of it, which is allowed them. They who advance such principles as these, might as well say at once, that there was no such thing as happiness designed for man: For it is not the exercise of the mind alone, that is attended with uneasiness: they who maintain, that man's chief good consists in the exercise of his body, and the indulgence of his appetites, will never be able to shew, that this will meet with no interruptions, nor ever be attended with pain. And he who can bring himself seriously to believe, that *Thinking* is contrary to nature and man's true happiness, because uneasy thoughts may arise; might as well fancy, that *Eating* was contrary to nature, and abstain from all food, because some sorts of it were nauseous, and others contained poison in them.

It may easily be seen and allowed, that in the very brightest parts of our happiness there is a large share of shade intermixt, which, viewed through the false medium of a gloomy apprehension *, may swell into a

* Tell the morose and sullen traveller, whose malign eye is always shut against the fair side of things, and impr

size far beyond it's true proportion. It must be farther owned, that the very best of our improvements bring with them sufficient marks of imperfection to humble us into a sense of our duty and dependence — to teach us, that we are to look for perfect happiness, not from our own weak powers, nor on this frail earth, but from his bounty, who as an earnest of what he can and will do for us, has given us the happiness we enjoy, not complete indeed, but far superior to the misery, that abates it, and capable of increase, we find, from our own endeavours.

Were it otherwise, this life, instead of being

and loves to dwell only on their ugliest appearances, how cheerful and pleasant it is to have an agreeable companion on the road ! he will perhaps mutter in return, that the chief use he sees in the best company, is only to cover you with dirt in bad weather, and with dust in good. But must we therefore by such a sarcastic representation of things be induced to quit our friend ; with whom we know how to be happy ; who is continually pointing out to us new matter of amusement, which without him we might have overlooked ; and who by lending an attentive ear to our discoveries, doubles the pleasure we have in making them ? Let the fullen wretch ride on, despising and despised by all, out of humor with every little untoward circumstance, and pleased with none ; whilst we can pick out matter for amusement and improvement even from our very distresses and inconveniences.

ing a state of happiness or probation, would health be a scene of misery and punishment; and enjoy that the worst, which imagination can well provide for; as we should be the necessary authors ^{eternal} of our own sufferings. We should not only ^{our} reason to no purpose; — not only study ^{our} circumstances into doubts and perplexities (as the best by poet describes the damned to do) but after ^{tempta} having used our best endeavours to discover ^{will no} fresh means of happiness, we should have ^{which is} the cruel mortification to find, that we had ^{is a ble} only employed our ingenuity to devise new ^{will eve} materials for our misery. Surely it can never ^{with pr} be thought, that this could be the order and ^{heaven} constitution of things, settled and appointed ^{all} by a wise and benevolent Being. Let those consider then, who make it their busi- ^{ness} to vilify and decry human happiness, what an injury they do to God's moral attributes and perfections!

All that can be fairly inferred from the most unfavourable appearances, is, that the means of happiness are not necessarily such -- that we may and frequently do pervert them in such a manner, as to make them become our greatest misfortunes. But who would argue from thence, that they had better never been given us? The blessing ^{of} health

health is as frequently misapplied, as any we
and enjoy: would it have been better then for
Providence to have consigned us over to per-
petual sickness? It may be an alleviation of
our sorrow, when we are thrown into such
circumstances, to consider, that we are at
the least by this means happily free from many
temptations, which others are liable to: but it
will not follow, either that health is an evil,
which injures our happiness; or, that sickness
has a blessing, which promotes it: and no one
will ever fancy, that it can be so, who thinks
with proper gratitude on the favors, which
heaven bestows; — or indeed who thinks at
all.

C H A P. III.

The Happiness of social and savage Life compared

KEEPING then in mind the above allowances, let us now take a nearer view of social and savage life; and we shall soon discern, on which side the preference lies.

We have already seen, in what the happiness of a savage must consist *. With so few avenues open to pleasure, it is reasonable to allow, that a number will by the same means be shut against uneasiness. To do him the greatest justice we can in the comparison let us suppose him past the helpless state of childhood; and that he is not yet arrived at second childhood, feeble old age; that he is little subject to sickness, and as little sensible of pain. Yet with all these advantageous circumstances, how great might his suffering be, should an accidental lameness unfit him for the chase; or an inclement season destroy his fruits? And what a dreadful picture might be drawn of him, should he by chance dislocate a joint, or break a limb? How much

* Page 27. "Les seul biens, qu'il connoisse."

the feeling heart shudder to view him, laid on the cold earth, where his misfortune first happened; with no skilful hand to minister assistance; no friendly tongue to comfort him; subject to be torn in pieces by the next wild beast, that discovered him, the least shocking circumstance perhaps in his situation; without all hopes but in time or death; and if not sure to die of his wound, yet the almost certain victim of hunger and of thirst!

To make however the greatest possible concession, let it be supposed, that the man, who is miserable in society, is still more wretched, than we have even described this unhappy savage to be: yet what would follow from hence? A fallen angel may suffer still more, than the most wretched of mortals; as misery, exclusive of it's positive evil, is probably always proportionable to the happiness, which we ourselves before enjoyed, or which we see others in possession of at present; but this surely would not be looked upon as any kind of proof, that a good angel was not happier, than we are. How would the argument shock us, that should dissuade us from attempting to gain the happiness of heaven, because if we failed in our

attempt, we should be more miserable, than if we had never made it !

Without entering then into nice disquisitions about it's origin, whether it was the child of reason, or of chance ; or from whatever cause it sprung ; to take it as it is in the world, the true account of what society has done for us, is probably this.—It has introduced some evils into life, which otherwise would have had no existence, but then it has also been the happy means of many great advantages and comforts, of which without it we had been entirely destitute. And even for those ills, which necessarily attend it, it has provided, in most cases, correspondent remedies. Do we labor under pain and sickness ? The Physician is at hand to give us ease. Are we ready to faint under the heavy burden of misfortunes ? The voice of Religion will speak comfort to our souls. But it unluckily happens, that we are perverse enough to dwell upon the ills of life, and will not reflect upon it's blessings ; half of which, such as security and defence against the inclemency of seasons, and the invasion of hunger by a constant and regular supply of food and cloathing, we scarce ever think of !

Taking

Taking a fair account of the evil and the good of it together, we may safely grant the worst, that can be said against society. Let it be urged, that it has given birth to many crimes and vices. — We can justly reply, that it has also been the kind parent of every virtue. Be it allowed, that the consciousness of guilt and dread of shame may bring on such terrors to the mind, as they who know not, what shame or transgression is, are free from. — Will not the reflexion on virtuous deeds, the thoughts of having done our duty, the heart-felt joy of having been the means of happiness to others, and the cheerful voice of praise, declaring our worth, yield pleasures, that will more than equal all that uneasiness? Suppose there is no room in what they so falsely call a state of nature for dishonesty, falsehood, malice, and ingratitude. — Would not such a state exclude also all those tender ties and tenderer offices of love and friendship? Those endearing relations of husband, father, son and brother; that raise such feeling sympathies, kindle such a glow of affection, and give such a polish and softness to humanity? The man alone, who is insensible of these, if he deserves that name, who is so, can seek for

happiness in woods and solitude! He alone, who by his crimes and vices has rendered mankind his enemies; who lives in daily fear of paying his life a forfeit to the community, whose laws and peace he has violated; can envy the solitary savage, who after his morning chace is over, and he has dined upon his prey, now fears, lest he in turn should become a prey himself; and hiding himself in his thick cover, scarce enjoys a wakeful kind of slumber*, for listening to the noise of some approaching danger!

* Seul, oisif, et toujours voisin du danger, l'homme sauvage doit aimer à dormir, et avoir le sommeil léger comme les animaux, qui pensant peu, dorment, pour ainsi dire, tout le temps, qu'ils ne pensent point. p.28.

CHAP. IV.

Of Improvements in Civil Life.

SOME however may think, though they do not carry the hypothesis so far as to prefer absolute barbarism to society, that yet there is nevertheless a certain honest plainness in the early manners and institutions of civil life, which highly recommends them; and that, in leaving this original simplicity, men left the fairest chance they ever had for happiness.

But remove that secret charm, which lies hid in the word *First*, and which always runs away with our admiration; and it will soon be seen, what little foundation there is for such a supposition.

There is indeed a necessity in unsettled states for men to adhere strictly to certain principles, and to practise certain duties without the obligation of Laws, which may not yet be formed: and this no doubt at first sight gives them a specious appearance of disinterested benevolence. The veriest reprobates upon earth, in a case of common danger, may do such things for the public good, as in other circumstances they would never have thought of: — and with those

who look no farther, they may by this means get the character of great worth and honesty.— But what should we think of his reasoning, who should conclude, because he saw these men acting in such a situation better, than he expected they would, that therefore they were the best of all mankind? And who in his senses, if he could avoid it, would choose to be in a state of danger, rather than of security, merely because he might experience some acts of kindness from those about him in the former case, which in the latter he would not want?

How weakly too must they reason, who can think, that the less perfect any thing is, the more likely it is to answer it's end? Yet thus *they* must reason, if they reason at all, *who* can fancy, that men in the beginning of society were happier, than they are now: or they must say, that the first essays towards civil Government, Agriculture, and Architecture, reached at once to the highest possible degree of perfection.— Which of the two would be the least absurd proposition?

The first * Government, that was formed, might be much better, than Anarchy:

but

* Mr. *Rousseau*, who seems to be exceedingly out of humour with government says, p. 5th. “Necessity

fit

but in such a government how many cases must there necessarily be, intirely unprovided for; in which the situation of mankind would be little bettered? Time and attention to the several exigencies, as they arose, could alone give any thing like a finishing hand to these rude beginnings.

The first crop of corn, which the cultivated ground yielded, would, no doubt, be

a

sity at first raised thrones, but Arts and Sciences confirmed them". Now what necessity could it be, which *at first raised thrones*? One is much at a loss to guess; unless it were a necessity, arising from the vices of mankind, which could no other way be restrained within proper bounds, than by the strong chains of government. But if it was such a necessity, it will appear, unluckily enough for Mr. *Rousseau*'s argument, that there were vices and unhappiness too in the world, before Arts and Sciences introduced them: why else should such a remedy be wanting? That Arts and Sciences have indeed confirmed thrones, one may intirely agree with Mr. *Rousseau*, though not altogether in his sense of the words. How Necessity does it's busines, we are all well aware — in a very rough and uncouth manner. The governments it introduced, were such, we may suppose, as serv'd, in some degree, to repress injuries; to keep savages in order: but it is owing to Arts and Sciences, that they are become such at length, as rational creatures may with pleasure submit to, without regretting the los's of that original liberty, which, whatever Mr. *Rousseau* may say in praise of it, could never be designed for man to continue in: if it was, nature did her work most bunglingly, that it should be necessary so soon to mend it.

a very valuable accession to the comforts and conveniences of life: but how can we suppose, that either the ends of the husbandman, or of the community were so well answered then; as when afterwards proper manures and an experienced management of the earth, had made *the vallies stand so thick with corn*, that, in the language of the Psalmist, “ they should laugh and sing”?

The first house or hut, that was built, might be a more convenient shelter from the weather, than the covert or the cave: Yet who can imagine, that all the conveniences of a house would immediately be discovered on the first trial?

We might argue thus, if mere necessity or use alone were the standards to measure perfection by in these instances; which however is by no means the case. Some dignity and ornament ought to accrue to human life from them, or they will but poorly answer their end —

“ O, reason not the need,” (says the most philosophical of all poets) —

“ Our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous;
Allow not nature more, than nature needs,
Man’s life is cheap as beast’s.” —

A Reasoner on Mr. *Rousseau*'s principles might say, that nature had provided for us such a temperament of body, and such a skin to cover it, as would be sufficient to bear all the changes and inclemencies of different seasons and climates. On that supposition, the man, who first cloathed himself in the shaggy spoils of the prey he had killed, was guilty of an unpardonable breach of Nature's laws. However had mankind stopt there; and wore their covering only in that original unmanufactured state; they would have differed so little from those animals, whose dress they had usurped, that it would have been extremely difficult to ascertain their superiority by any other proof, than that, which could shew they were endued with greater strength, cunning, or swiftness.

If our natural constitution too were such, as was best suited to digest victuals, reeking from the slaughter; the simple cookery of boiling, or roasting, would not only be a faulty piece of luxury; but a real injury to our health. Let men however only be cloathed in skins, and feed on their raw prey, mast or acorns; what a poor preeminence would they have to boast of? It cannot surely be imagined, either that Beings, who would soon experience within them a principle,

push-

pushing them on to better things, and pointing out the way to higher attainments, could possibly be restrained within such narrow and unworthy bounds; or that Nature could design, they should. They, who think she could intend this, must charge her with the glaring inconsistency of furnishing us with principles, which must necessarily soon defeat the end, she had in view.

But Nature cannot properly be looked upon, as the Architect of our happiness: — she only supplies us with the materials and means, which it is the business of Art to use and apply: and the degree of perfection in this case must depend upon the degree of skill in those who make use of these means. The representation, which *Locke* gives of the human mind, as it first comes from Nature's hands; when he compares it to a blank sheet, unstained by any, but capable of receiving all sorts of impressions; is, in some measure, a true representation of the great Volume of Nature; which is all but one universal Blank; till Art has stamped

* “*Faber quisque fortunæ suæ*,” is perhaps a true proposition, if we construe *fortunæ, happiness*, that if we take it in any other sense. We are indebted to Nature for bringing us into the world in certain circumstances, and for giving us certain faculties; but the rest must be all our own doing.

and it's characters upon it. And however more
pleasing to the eye this original purity and
whiteness may appear; just as the sheet did
which I am at this instant blotting; yet this
can never be argument enough to persuade
us, that it was made on purpose always to
continue so. We have all the reason in the
world to conclude the direct contrary: and
however Nature's designs may be thwarted
or perverted in particular instances, we
ought surely to entertain a more respectable
and opinion of her councils and foresight, than
to suppose this ever could happen in the
general course of things.

As some advances then must be made, — the
order, which both reason and matter of fact
would point out to us for the natural pro-
gress of human affairs, might perhaps be
exhibited to our view by a scale,
marked at proper intervals, with the follow-
ing gradations — Necessity — Convenience —
Elegance — Propriety.

The first object of man's attention must
necessarily be his most pressing wants. View-
him however in the light, in which he
commonly considered, merely as an ani-
mal of certain determinate abilities, these
would be very few; and nature has furnished
an

an ample, and an easily procurable provision for them. After the natural appetites of hunger, thirst, and what would lead him to continue his species, were satisfied; a secure repose would be almost all a savage life would need. If he farther required some shelter from the storm, or the cold; the covert, or the cave would afford it to him, as readily as to his brother brutes. But taking man for what he really is, a Being made and designed for continual improvement; the above account would but ill express his natural wants: so that this first, and indeed all the other divisions, must be enlarged, as we advance in perfection. The circle, which would include all the Necessities, Conveniences, &c. of a Negro, or a North-American, would fall far short of comprehending

* those of an Englishman, or an European.

After we have learnt in some sort to satisfy our wants, our next consideration will natu-

* I do not mean however to make these quite so many as my ingenious friend, the author of THE LADIES NECESSARIES FOR THE YEAR 1760 has done: — who, (I perceive from a waste sheet of his works,, which brought me the paper on which I write from the Stationer's) has reckoned up under the article of *Necessaries for Lady-day Quart* no less than fifty different trades, many of which deal in no less, than a hundred and fifty different Articles.

rally be, how to do this for the future with the most convenience: and being masters of this also, we shall next bestow our attention on setting off these conveniences with some degree of ornament. The first essays towards which, must necessarily be clumsy and awkward; and from experience we might perhaps be justified in adding, profuse in quantity and in number. It will be the business of taste, which will succeed next in order, to give some measure, form, and elegance to these rude ornaments.*

It

* As Dress and Architecture are what furnish the leading ideas in such considerations, as the present; it may not be amiss perhaps to sketch out and exemplify, by their means, the order above laid down. We may take it for granted I think, that it was Necessity, which first suggested the thought of a covering to defend us from the cold. — It was Convenience however most certainly, which formed this covering into a particular shape, and furnished it with pockets and some other appendages. After this succeeded the spirit of Ornament, and added sleeves and folds; and laying hold of what convenience had devised, spread buttons without end over every part of our cloaths, for nothing but mere show; as may be seen at large in the dresses of our Ancestors. It has been the endeavour of Taste, however slow it's success, to give some shape and elegance to these sleeves and folds: and it would be perhaps the business of Propriety to destroy intirely both the one and the other; as it has done, if it will not hurt the beautiful

part

It is one thing however to reduce the former absurdity and extravagance of ornament to some reasonable measure, and some tolerable

part of our species to quote the instance, with hoops and caps; which art had been long in vain attempting to give some grace and beauty to. But least dwelling longer on such subjects as these should be looked upon as letting down the dignity of philosophy; let us pass on to the nobler instance of Architecture.

Man would scarce have got within his hut, secure from the wind and storm, and satisfied himself a little with the convenience of it; before he would be attempting to ornament it both within and without. And indeed it would be no very difficult matter to trace most of the ornaments in Architecture up to very simple beginnings. Who can doubt, for example, that the projecting ends of spars, tied to the uprights by little brackets, gave the first idea of a cornice and it's modillions? As little can it be doubted, that the pent-house at the door, made to defend the entring guest from the dropping of the eaves and supported by it's two posts or props, gave rise to the sumptuous pediment; the chapters of whose pillars at first were nothing more, than the simple stumps of branches, imperfectly lopt off, interspersed with some smaller twigs and leaves; though since set off with all the variety of five different Orders. But it shall be suspected here of imitating the ingenious solution, which a great writer has given us of the Gothic roof. Besides the dignity and merit of Grecian Architecture is so thoroughly established, that any attempt to lessen it, would only fall back on the head of him, who should set about it. Turn we our eyes then to some of the early specimens of Building

among

rable degree of elegance; and another to devise something new, which may be more suitable, and answer the end better. The attempt-

amongst ourselves; What a number of little conveniences shall we discover? What a profusion of ornaments in the next place presents itself to our view? — Scarce a stone, or piece of wood, in the whole fabric, that does not carry on it evident marks of the ingenuity of the Graver's tool, either representing, in some curious device, the arms of the owner, or the shape of some wolf, griffin, or other monster, drawn in all the most frightful distortions of hideous ugliness! Whilst to shew the refined taste, which then prevailed, even the water on the roof is conveyed off by spouts passing through the figure of a human face; which, being ingeniously supported by two hands, frequently presents such an appearance, as the reader would hardly thank me for conveying more fully to his imagination. And at the same time to characterize their want of feeling, the great Door at the entrance is made to be pulled to and fro' by a ring, drawn through the jaw, and held by the teeth, of something, that is intended to represent the head of an animal!

It was in vain for taste to endeavour at any refinement of such horrid emblems of barbarity, as these: — farther improvement has therefore with great propriety intirely suppressed them.

If it was not likely to carry one too far, it would perhaps be no very difficult undertaking, nor altogether foreign to the present inquiry, to point out a distant kind of resemblance at least between the processes above laid down, and that which has taken place in matters of much higher consequence; such as, Ethics, Politics, Religion, &c. But at present I will

attempting to do this, with it's successive progress, constitutes the last division in the scale, which I have called Propriety. Many subdivisions

leave it to the reader to carry on the comparison in these instances, by the help of his own fancy and observation. And in the mean time will take the opportunity of assigning some of those causes, that seem to have prevented Architecture from making that progress amongst the Moderns, especially amongst us of this kingdom; which otherwise, if we formed our judgement only upon the degree of perfection to which other arts are brought, might reasonably have been expected.

In the first place then, even our improvements in other instances, have greatly contributed (which is seldom the case) to hinder our advances in this. By our knowing a little more of Hydrostatics, than was formerly known, we have learnt, that there is no need to build vast aqueducts at immense expence across vallies of a large extent; which afforded such a continual fund of employment to the architects of former ages.

As we are become also more civilized and humane, we should have now no relish for the barbarous exhibitions of the Amphitheatre; and therefore have no more occasion for that species of building: by which means another main source of ancient architecture intirely stopt up.

We have in some degree quitted the towering flights of Heroes, chalked out by fiction and epic poetry; and have descended into the humbler path of sober men and rational creatures: Temples, Obelisks, and Triumphal Arches are therefore now no longer raised to flatter a Conqueror's, or rather Murderer's vanity, and to encourage others to k

visions however might be added; such as Pleasure, Refinement, &c. — But these, to avoid minuteness, I have purposely omitted.

By

as many, and do as much mischief, as he had done.

By our being happily freed from the evils of civil war, and by the whole Island's being united into one Kingdom, we are not now under the bitter necessity of erecting Walls, Fortress, and Castles, for places of defence, and to maintain a barrier: things, which afford a much more pleasing prospect, when beheld in ruins! — Hail, ye ancient venerable battlements! How well does that ivy covering become you! whilst your only inhabitants the hooting owl, and chattering daw, now securely wing their way through those openings, from whence the marksman took his aim, and sent the feathered arrow on it's hostile errand! Long may ye rear your antique heads, as monuments of former misery, the better to remind us of that happiness, which even whilst we are enjoying we are too apt to forget!

Lastly, to the piety of our good Ancestors, or perhaps in some instances to their consciences, wrought upon by the terrors of guilt, and managed by the holy zeal of their Confessors, we are indebted for an ample supply of Churches and public Edifices of that sort.

So that all the employment of the modern Architect is almost necessarily confined to private houses, and now and then a bridge. — Had they the same subjects to exercise their skill upon, which their predecessors had, what a number of improvements upon the dry rules and examples of Vitruvius and Palladio, might not men of genius in this science make by the help of some late philosophical explanations of what constitutes the true nature of the *Sublime* and *Beautiful*!

By laying down the above gradations in a certain order, I would not be understood to mean, that the progress of human affairs through them has been uniform and regular: on the contrary, it is certain, that they have sometimes gone back a little; but then like those, who would overleap some opposing difficulty, they seem only to have made a voluntary retreat, in order to advance again with the greater spring.

Neither do I mean, by stopping at *Propriety*, to limit human improvements within these bounds. Though perhaps most people will think, if I had, there would still have been employment enough left to exercise the wits of succeeding generations for many ages, before they had completed all that is included even within these limits.

What I intended was only to assign such terms, as might take in all, that had hitherto been done.— There may be degrees of *Propriety*, and even of *Perfection*, which may afford room enough for an endless progression both in Knowledge and in Happiness.

It
* W
together
our An
grid-iron
walks c
every c
green, t
forms, t
a clumsy
We hav
advances

ful! And what a noble opportunity for shewing these improvements would not the building of a ROYAL PALACE afford, if it was made suitable either to the riches and importance of the British Crown, or to the worth and greatness of **Him**, who wears it!

It might be difficult too to assign precisely the point, at which we are arrived in this progression: from many appearances however both within doors and without; in the closet, and in the field; in the drawing-room, and in the garden; I think one might conclude, that we are somewhere upon the borders of the last division.*

But it was not for such speculations, that I produced this imaginary scale; it was only to ask, with the greater precision, at which of these divisions mankind should have stopt, in order to have gained the greatest share of happiness? Which perhaps, at last, will be best determined by an instance.

A Commonwealth has been frequently compared to a ship. Let us hold this comparison up, and look at it a little. The man, who either through necessity or choice, ventured

* What Loads of wood, and how awkwardly put together, went to the making up the furniture of our Ancestors apartments? And what a miserable grid-iron taste was exhibited in the parallel beds and walks of their Pleasure Gardens, ornamented at every corner with some poor unfortunate Evergreen, tortured into the most unnatural and Gothic forms, that the rude and barbarous imagination of a clumsy hedge-cutting Gardener could devise? — We have certainly in these instances, made large advances of late towards some degree of *Propriety*.

tured himself upon a rude raft, or hollowed trunk; and in it failed, or swam across the stream, too deep for fording; made certainly the first attempt towards the art of Navigation. Did he, who gave the shape of a boat, and added oars to this rude raft, make it worse? — Did he, who farther secured it by the addition of a deck, anchor, cables, mast, sails, rudder, &c. forming thereby a regular ship, render the original discovery still less useful? — And did he, who lastly, by the invention of the compass, completed the art of navigating this vessel, give the finishing hand towards spoiling it for use? — Or is not the direct contrary of all this true? — The other side of the comparison is so obvious that it is needless to go through the particulars of it: but we may safely conclude that the same sort of process, which at length completed the art of navigation, must have a similar effect in rendering human Governments, and every thing that belongs to them more perfect, and more likely to answer the ends, for which they were designed; and which could seemingly be no other than human happiness.*

* To carry on however the above allusion a little farther, we may observe, that the ship of state being

If there be some, who will be convinced of this by nothing but experience; let them follow Norden up the Nile, from Alexandria to the cataracts, and see how society improves, the farther they go from a state of civilization towards barbarism! How much more happy will they find it to live in the parts about Derri, than at Alexandria, or Grand Cairo! And yet how very imperfect is the most improved state in Egypt, when compared to European policy?

made, like it's archetype, of perishable materials, however artfully compacted, must like it also be liable in time to decay: It will require therefore frequently to be careened and refitted; — nay, sometimes to be almost intirely rebuilt, with only a few of the original principles preserved just like the head or stern-post to intitle it to it's old name. What is worse, when this ship is in it's best trim, factions may arise on board, and she may be overset and lost by imprudent management. — Or, if not so, there is many a latent rock unknown to the most able pilot: — storms too and sudden tempests may arise, enough to baffle all the strength and art of the hardiest seaman. — All therefore, which can be safely concluded, is, that the more skilfully this vessel is constructed, and the better the mariners are on board, the greater chance she has, as the phrase is, to weather it out.

C H A P. V.

Of the Patriarchal, Grecian, and Roman Governments.

BUT how plausible soever it may seem in theory, or from some recent examples, "that the wiser men grow, the better governments they will have;" there are I make no doubt, many people in the world, who will fancy notwithstanding, that our best modern institutions fall far short of those, which obtained in Greece or Rome; and farther still of those, which rendered the lives of the early Patriarchs as much happier, as they were longer, than our's,

Perhaps, if history had described any more ancient Governments than these, they would have sent us still farther back in search of happiness and perfection. But though we are not particularly informed, under what kinds of Government Men lived before the Flood; yet we are fully assured by the most authentic records, "that the whole earth was filled with violence": which, as it is a circumstance, that makes but little in favour of their perfection, so does it convey to the mind but a poor idea of the happiness then subsisting in the world!

Before

Before we examine however any farther into the merits of this matter, or endeavour to find out what foundation there may be in fact for such suppositions; it may not be amiss to settle in the first place some general and primary principles, which must essentially enter into our idea of all Government, whenever we consider it as a Good, and by a fitness to promote which in a greater or less degree, the several different species of it, whatever their particular constitution may be, will be more or less perfect, and productive of happiness. — Perhaps it will be allowed, that the three following are principles of this sort — Security — Liberty — and the means of a comfortable Subsistence.

If man were placed in Mr. *Rousseau*'s ideal state of nature, he would have a right to whatever he wanted, wherever he could find it; and he would also be at liberty to rove, wherever he pleased. The precarious manner however in which he must subsist, and the continual dangers, to which he would be exposed, would render his situation far from desirable. Whatever he was in pursuit of, or whatever he had acquired, he might be liable the next moment to be driven from, or deprived of, by one of his own species, either more swift or more strong,

than

than he was. If then in some of his comfortless ramblings he should accidentally meet with one of these, who far from attempting to kill him, or to take from him the coarse fare he was eating, should by some means or other make him understand, that he would take him under his protection; and be bound to defend him, and every thing he acquired, against all others; if he would only in return do some little services for him, which he might easily perform; — that he might be almost sure of a constant supply of food with him; — and that he should be intirely at his liberty to leave him whenever he should think himself severely treated. — Could he on any due reflection refuse to embrace so promising an offer?

Encrease the numbers concerned in such a contract, and superadd to the conditions already mentioned a right in the ruler to punish offences; and we shall have the idea of a Government, in which a considerable advantage is stipulated for on the side of the governed, and only some little honor, ease, or authority on the part of the governor. It will be of small importance in this case, whether the ruling powers be vested in One, in a Few, or in Many.

But

But upon trial if the subject finds, that his pretended patron is unable or unwilling to protect him; by which means he suffers continual insults and injuries; and lives in as much fear, as he did before; — that so far from meeting with a ready and constant supply of necessaries, he sees himself daily subject, by the ill management of his master, to the dreadful calamity of famine, besides being involved in many other disagreeable circumstances. — Who would say, if such were to be the consequence, that he had parted with his liberty to any good purpose?

I would not have it imagined from any thing I have here said, that I was pretending to account for the origin of government: all I intended was merely to explain what I meant by the three principles above-mentioned; and which in fewer words is only this, that let the origin of Government be what it will, if the end be not in some degree a real improvement in the circumstances of those, who live under it, it cannot be fit for rational creatures to submit to: — and that one species of it will always be exactly so much better, than another, in proportion as it answers this end more effectually.

If any one thinks it would be more natural, in the instance above supposed, for

the stronger savage to seize the weaker, and without any conditions on his part to make him his slave; and can fancy also, that it would be easy for him to keep him in that state of subjection; he has my free leave to substitute this supposition instead of the other, with only this clause annexed; that if mankind were either originally born, or soon after made slaves, they would at least by this time have found out the art of making their chains fit the easier, and of rendering their confinement less disagreeable.

These things being thus premised, let us now take a short survey of the three different Governments above-mentioned as far as human welfare is concerned in them. And as the Patriarchs stand first in point of time, let us begin with them, and see what pretensions they can fairly make to this contested superiority.

We shall be better able to prosecute this inquiry, as we have some specimens of nearly the same form of government with their's, still subsisting in the world; and, which may be reckoned rather particular, in nearly the same countries: the present clans or hordes of Tartars, flying camps of Arabs, &c. affording us a tolerably just idea of those old

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moving Communities, which had their habitation in tents, pitched occasionally, where they could find water and pasture for their cattle. And indeed this of Clans or Hords, though with some difference one from another, seems to have been the original state of society amongst all nations: whose chief employment we shall find, wherever we hear of them, has uniformly been, rather to make depredations upon their neighbour's property, than to prevent any occasion for this by exerting their own industry to provide enough for their wants at home. In which mixt species of war and robbery the nimblest hunter would naturally become a character of the first consequence*. And the greater number of these characters there was in such confederacy, the better chance would they have for security and subsistence.

As to Liberty they might either enjoy it or not, just as it happened. The Arabs,

* Accordingly we find this account given of Simeon, (the first founder of a kingdom) when he began to be a mighty one in the earth,—that he was a mighty *Hunter*. If it was not for a peculiar dignity in the sacred writings, this relation would not appear unlike what is said of some of our present North American Chiefs. “ *Apud quos s. Corn. Nep. says it was among the Persians) fortior Venari summa laus est.*”

Montesquieu observes, have it: the Tartars not. But in either case it is easy to see, that society in such a state is but one small remove from the situation of the Savage above described; — it is but a kind of agreement to hunt in troops, and to defend their prey. The inconveniences attending such a state lie so open to every one's imagination, that it might seem impertinent to make any reference to history for a farther account of them.

If however any one should entertain a doubt that such a description would be unfair, when applied to the Patriarchs; he need only look into the writings of Moses to be thoroughly satisfied, that such an application would be far from doing them any injustice. The frequent *strivings* (which is but a softer term for the fightings) of one set of Herdsmen with another, which we read of there — their being obliged to watch their flock all night; — the difficulty they were under of getting provision for their cattle, and especially water in a country, which is almost literally what the Psalmist calls “barren and dry land, where no water is;” — and the many famines, which in consequence of this and their having no settled or secured tillage, they endured; are surely all together

such circumstances, as will afford arguments enough to prove, that this manner of living is but poorly calculated to answer the end either of security or subsistence.

Had it not been indeed for the peculiar guidance of Providence, what condition of existence could have been worse, than that of the Patriarchs, "at what time they wandered about from one country to another; from one kingdom to another people?" whose precarious happiness was continually liable to be interrupted not only from their own imperfect circumstances, but also from the perpetual wars and feuds, which were subsisting between those nations, in or near whose territories they had their dwelling!

In Greece however, it must be owned, society put on a much more promising appearance. Men had here regular cities, and fixt habitations to dwell in. Their early philosophers too, or lawgivers, wisely taught them the use and advantages of Agriculture: which, if properly attended to, would have produced a happy alteration indeed in their circumstances! but it was an art of rather too dull and laborious a kind to be heartily esteemed by those, who had been used to a less confined and more idle method of subsisting.

Hunters

Hunters and Warriors are characters but ill suited, and commonly too proud, to submit to the drudgery of the plough. Accordingly we find, it was left here almost intirely to the management of their slaves, or those they had conquered, and brought into a state of dependence: whilst a taste for war and military exercises so intirely prevailed amongst the masters, that had it not been, Montesquieu observes, for a peculiar attention at the same time to music (which was therefore always regarded in their laws as an article of main importance) they would in all probability have deserved the title of *Barbarians* as much as any of those, on whom they so freely bestowed that degrading appellation.

What mischievous effects this martial spirit and love for arms must have had in such a situation as Greece was in, amongst a number of little petty sovereignties, crowded together in a very narrow compass, is easy to be imagined. We may assist the imagination however, or bring the picture at least more home to ourselves, if we only fancy the several different corporate towns in our own Kingdom, with certain portions of land lying round them, to become so many separate states, the Mayor, Common-Council, an

Aldermen *, being both Legislators and Leaders of Armies; invested each with supreme power, a right of making war, and inroads into each other's territories, for injuries received, instead of appealing to any common head or body of Laws; some of them by principle encouraging theft and frauds, and none of them deeply impressed with steady notions of justice †; if we only imagine, I say, such a state of things to take place, the same fierce thirst for arms still prevailing; and then reflect for a moment on the peace and harmony likely to attend it; we shall have no very imperfect idea of that happiness,

* It may be thought by some perhaps, that these peaceful Magistrates are but poor representatives of the warlike *Archons*, *Ephori*, &c. of the Grecian states; — but yet it is the common idea which translators give us of these great Officers. Thus Sir Walter Raleigh, “ Erixias was the last Archon of the *Decennial* Governors at Athens, which form was then changed into *annual* Magistrates, *Mayors*, or *Burgomasters*, of which Theseus was the first.”

† Whoever considers how perpetually and shamefully almost every treaty was broke amongst them, and that on all sides, will not think that this is said without foundation. It is rather particular too, that Corn. Nepos tells us of Aristides, “ ut unus *hominum memoriam*, quod quidem nos *audierimus cognomine JUSTUS* sit appellatus.” And it was

ness, which blessed the members of the § Grecian commonwealths. And in fact this

was a pleasant reason enough, which was given by one, why he voted for his banishment, “ that was true indeed he knew nothing at all of Aristides, but that he did not like his affectation of being called **JUST.** ”

§ If Homer wrote his *Iliad*, as it is said he did with the political view of uniting these jarring and discordant bodies; and only veiled, under the covering of what happened at the siege of Troy, the quarrels and dissensions, with their attendant evils, which he saw then actually subsisting before his eyes, what an unfavourable picture of his country does this present to our view? There is no occasion however to appeal to poetry for a proof of this: their history proves the same in so many instances, that it is needless to quote them. It is indeed little else, from beginning to end, but one continued collection of surrections and ostracism, war and outrage, plague and famines, oracles and prodigies. Poor material indeed most of them for human happiness!—It may be said however, that these are the proper subjects of history, according to the animated description which Tacitus has given us of their historians; “ *Qveteres populi Romani res composuerent, ingenia bella, expugnaciones urbium, fusos captosque reges & libero egressu memorabant:* ” but yet if peace fell in their way, however unworthy a topic it’s quiet might be for their bold style, they might surely deign to mention how long it continued, if it were only just to tell us, how many years passed without any thing happening worth their relating. When one sees therefore so little said about it, it seems reasonable to conclude, that there was not much opportunity for it.

seems to have been nearly the state, which this Kingdom was once in: but little do they deserve the happiness they now enjoy, who can suppose they should have been happier in such a situation, than they are at present!

As for Rome; If indeed the road, by which one set of men is to come at happiness, lies through the lives and fortunes of all others, Rome was the country in the world, of which one should have wished most to have been a citizen! But in what other view can one look upon this great Mistress of the Universe as peculiarly calculated to promote the well being of those, who were so idly proud of being called her sons? Deference perhaps to her grandeur, and reverence for those great names, which either supported her honor by their actions, or have since celebrated her praises in their writings, may make one fearful of saying anything, that should seem to derogate from her merit so well established and so generally allowed: but whoever will read her history, without being dazzled either by the splendor of glory, or the authority of opinions; whoever will examine facts as they stand related by her own writers, (by whom

we are at least in no danger of being misled to her disadvantage,) and not as they appear when dressed out by art in modern systems, will, I am persuaded, find instances enough to lessen his admiration of Roman greatness enough to satisfy him, that however it might flatter the pride of men, it made them dearly pay, in the article of ease, for all the empty honor, it conferred upon them.

Scarce any thing indeed could be more various, or more different from itself at different periods, than this government was. But which of all the many forms, it successively put on, will allow us to say, it was well suited to the general good? If we look back to it's origin, we shall find it had a most unpromising beginning, being founded originally by a set of vagrants; who, from being private and separate Robbers, chose to commence public and united ones: who first seized upon a country, and then forced those, from whom they had taken it, to furnish them with the means of subsisting in it; and, if they refused this courteous request, made that refusal a sufficient pretence for fresh invasions upon their lives and properties. Not to insist however too much upon so unfavourable an outseting, as sup-

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porting themselves by robbery, and increas-
ing their numbers by ravishment, it must be
owned, that afterwards they made large ad-
vances, far beyond the Greeks, in their atten-
tion to agriculture, and what is intimately
connected with it, private property; though
they seem in fact never thoroughly to have
got rid of their first principles. As it was a
nation begun in violence,* it always in some
degree continued so: It consisted at one pe-
riod, of a people without † liberty, at ano-
ther,

* Livy calls it a city “*vi et armis conditam*,” and
that it was maintained by the same principles, we
have this general reason to conclude, that the tem-
ple of Janus was never shut, or they never were at
peace all the time of the Republic, except once at
the end of the first Punic war.

† Such a licentious rabble, as it’s first citizens
were made up of, could not be kept in any order
but by the most severe laws: accordingly they en-
joyed under their Kings a very sparing allowance of
liberty; and even after they had expelled Tarquin
the last of them, they seem for some time only to
have exchanged one master for many. Livy himself
approves the idea which Pyrrhus’s Embassador enter-
tained of the Roman Senate, and says, “*Qui ex re-
gibus constare dixit, unus veram speciem Romani
Senatus cepit*”; though he means it no doubt as a
compliment. At least, however the Patricians might
be bettered in their condition by having shaken off
this check upon their power and authority, the
poor Plebeians received but little benefit from it.

ther, without any bounds to it; of a government either entirely arbitrary, or without any power; and never seems to have known the happy mean; at which the struggles of contending parties were too violent to stop; but always carried things far on the one side, or on the other, as they alternately happened to prevail.

Any attempt to introduce wholesome laws among them was commonly the cause of civil war and tumult: to appease which their usual recourse was to create a Magistrate * as absolute in his power, as the

They afterwards indeed made themselves ample amends: and then the evil was as great on the other side, the Magistrates being stript of all power, to such a degree, as is scarce to be imagined. Who can one think of that government, where the chief Magistrates had not power enough lodged in their hands, to apprehend and bring to punishment a traitor; one who was attempting to destroy the liberty of his country? Yet this we find was the case at Rome, from the defence which one of the Consuls makes in the case of Mælius, who was affecting even to be King. “ Tum T. Quintius, consules immerito increpari, ait, qui constricti legibus de provocacione ad dissolvendum imperium latis, nequaquam tantu virium in *Magistratu* ad eam rem pro atrocitate vindicandam, quantum animi haberent. &c. Liv. lii. 4. cap. 13.

* This high Magistrate was however created for very different purposes; — sometimes to conquer

people were in their liberty: which in the end proved one great + cause of their losing that inestimable blessing. It was, even in its best days, a nation of faction* and sedition; whose

province; — and sometimes both He and his *Master of Horse* were made for the important business of driving a nail. *Liv. lib. 7. cap. 3.* “Senatus Dictatorum *clavi figendi causā* dici jussit. Dictus L. Manlius Imperiosus L. Pinarium *Magistrum Equitum* dixit.

+ Machiavel indeed does not allow this, but seemingly for no other reason, than because he chooses to commend such an institution, as that of the Dictator at Rome: for, if they had not had such an office, which gave men a taste of absolute power, and taught them in some degree how to maintain it, it seems probable, that they would never have had either a *Sylla* or a *Cæsar*. And a much greater authority, than that of Machiavel, has declared, “that it was this, that overturned the Roman Republic.” (Montesquieu :) though he allows it great merit, as a temporary expedient. And indeed in this patch-work policy of temporary expedients the greatest art of the Roman Senate seems to have consisted.

* We have this declaration from the wisdom of the Senate itself, that “Dum Tribuni Consulesque ad quisque omnia trahant, nihil relictum esse virium in medio, distractam laceratamque Rempublicam, tantu magis quorum in manu sit, quam ut incolumis sit, utrue. ” Neither can these distractions be fairly ascribed to the occasional efforts of a few ambitious and designing men, though frequently no doubt owing to that cause, and always heightened by it; but they were so uniform and constant, they must

whose peace and happiness depended upon the will of a mob; the will of which again depended upon the first mouthing declaimer, who would ascend the rostrum, and harangue them in a set of rounded periods and sounding phrases.

To keep peace at home, they were for ever obliged to have war abroad; and to carry off the turbulent humors, which licentiousness and \ddagger ease engendered, they were

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have flowed directly, or have had their first rise, from the unsettled, and indeterminate nature of the constitution itself. The force of their *Senatusconsulta*, *Plebiscita*, *Edicts*, &c. were perpetually varying. Sometimes the *Consuls* had the upperhand of the *Tribunes*: and then these again would get to such a degree of insolence, as to threaten a *Consul* with chains; turn out a *Dictator*; and prevent any *Magistrates* being chosen for five years together. “*Livinius Sextiusque Tribuni plebis refecti nullos Curules Magistratus creari passi sunt: eaque solitudo magistratum per quinquennium urbem tenuit.*” *Liv.* *Lib. VI.* “*Ardens igitur Tribunus viatorem mittit ad Consulem; Consul Lictorem ad Tribunum.*” *Id. lib. 2.* *Tandem omnibus Tribunis plebis in eum coortis, seu vi seu verecundiâ victus Dictaturâ abiit (Manlius.) &c.*

\ddagger How little they knew how to make a proper use of ease at Rome, we have a striking instance in *Liv. Lib. IV. cap. 12.* beginning thus, “*sequitur hanc tranquillitatem rerum (though it had lasted but two years) annus multiplici clade ac periculo insignis, seditionibus, fame, &c.* And this famine in particular

was

continually sending their citizens to be let blood in foreign countries. Other nations have made war through prudence or ambition; but it was to the people of this a matter of necessity: and the greatness, at which by this means they arrived, is rather a proof of their domestic unhappiness, than any thing in their favor, how artfully soever their pride and their Poets have contrived to set it off, and to sing it up into a subject of envy. The world however has been as little obliged to them since, as it was when they made it the scene of their butchery and blood-shed; for in all probability it has been greatly owing to a faulty emulation of them in this real mark of Barbarism, that modern and more civilized nations have given so much into the horrid outrages of war.

That there breathed amongst them a most noble spirit of liberty, cannot be denied; but however this may deserve our imitation or applause, I know not whether we should pity them most for enjoying so little

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was so great, "that numbers of the common people, rather than endure the torment of living upon such conditions, having lost all hopes of support, voluntarily threw themselves into the Tiber and were drowned."

of that blessing *, of whose worth they shewed themselves so sensible, or condemn them for their continual attempts to rob all others of it; as if conscious of their own want of it, they had determined to make up that deficiency by collecting together all the little share of liberty, which other nations enjoyed.

As they were without, or rather above trade, they had no means of growing rich, (which yet they were in general exceedingly desirous of doing, notwithstanding their boasted examples to the contrary) but by exorbitant † usury, plunder, and provincial

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* After all the fine things, that have been said about it, what other notions can we form of their so much boasted *liberty*, but that it was something which occasioned perpetual disputes between the Consuls and the Tribunes, the senate and the people? for as to any constitutional or fixt principles, on which it depended, few except those, who are determined at any rate to admire the stupendous fabric of the Roman Commonwealth, will have eyes sharp enough to discover them amidst such perpetual changes of Power and Privilege.

† To shew in what manner the business of debtor and creditor was carried on at Rome in it's early and boasted days of freedom, I shall mention but one instance; which, as it is most beautifully described by the Historian, and lays open to our view a good deal of their domestic situation, I shall beg leave to quote at

full

governments; which two last, as they contrived it, were but in fact two different names for the same thing.

Hence

full length. Liv. Lib. II. cap. 23. “*Sed civitas secum ipsa discors intestino inter patres plebemque flagrabat odio; maxime propter nexos ob æs alienum: fremebant, se foris pro libertate et imperio dimicantes, domi a civibus captos et oppressos esse: tutioremque in bello quam in pace, inter hostes quam inter cives, libertatem plebis esse.* Invidiamque eam suâ sponte gliscentem insignis unius calamitas accedit. Magno natu quidam cum omnium malorum suorum insignibus se in forum projectit. *Obsita erat squalore vestis, fœdior corporis habitus, pallore ac macie perempti.* Ad hoc promissa barba et capilli efferaverant speciem oris. Noscitabatur tamen in tantâ deformitate, et ordines duxisse aiebant, aliaque militiæ decora vulgo, miserantes eum, jactabant. Ipse testes honestarum aliquot locis pugnarum, cicatrices adverso pectore ostentabat. Sciscitantibus unde ille habitus, unde deformitas, quum circumfusa turba esset prope in concionis modum; *Sabino bello, ait, se militantem, quia propter populationes agri non fructu modo caruerit, sed villa incensa fuerit, direpta omnia, pecora abacta, tributo iniquo tempore imperato æs alienum fecisse: id cumulatum USURIS, primo se agro paterno avitoque exuisse, deinde fortunis aliis: postremo velut tabem pervenisse ad corpus. Ductum se ab creditore, non in servitium, sed in ergastulum et carnificinam esse.* Inde ostentare tergum fœdum recentibus vestigiis verbum, &c.” To appease the clamors which such an appearance was likely to excite, one of the Consuls made an edict, quo edixit, “*Ne quis civem Romanum vincitum aut clausum teneret, quominus i nominis edendi apud Consules potestas fieret. Ne quis*

Hence war was made a business of choice, as well as of necessity; — it became their trade, and their Generals and Soldiers were their richest citizens. This, with the spirit of emulation and strength of attachment, which always act most forcibly in unsettled states (and this was, in an eminent degree, the case of Rome, during all the time it continued a Republic) may perhaps account for the number of shining characters to be met with in their history; and for the great figure, which they made in the world for so many years.

They had some tolerable institutions, it must be owned, for the police and management of a city; but whatever happiness these might have procured them, had they been content with a small territory in Italy, e-

nough

quis militis, donec in castris esset, bona possideret, aut venderet: *liberos nepotesve ejus moraretur.*" What a picture is this for those to look at, who envy the Romans their boasted liberty! Notwithstanding this edict however, (which indeed was never confirmed, the senate having sacrificed the credit of the Consul who made it, to their own pride) The unhappy Debtors found no relief for many years; till at length, on account of one of the most shameful instances of lust and cruelty, that ever was recorded, being practised upon one of their number, who was a youth of great beauty, that had surrendered himself prisoner to his creditor on account of his Father's debts, their sufferings were taken into consideration and somewhat abated.

nough to have made them respectable amongst their neighbours ; they forfeited all this, by living in daily opposition to the very fundamental principles of their constitution ; by prosecuting that vain and delusive scheme of becoming the Lords and Masters of the Universe. It might be a temporary relief for them to make war, in order to get rid of some turbulent spirits ; but seasonable defeats would have been of much more service to them, than all their boasted conquests. The first by checking their ambition might have kept them in a state of independence ; the last, instead of making them the lords of others, made them slaves to themselves. Every triumph, that they celebrated, might be regarded as performing the obsequies of their own liberty ; and their shouts of joy should have been changed into exclamations of sorrow !

I willingly pass over that dreadful period of his Republic, when *Proscription* and *Murder*, being let loose into their streets, wantonly ruined the fortunes, and cruelly ravaged the lives of their best citizens, to gratify the lust and glut the revenge of some of the worst ; then, as our incomparable *Shakespear* has it,

“ Good men’s lives
Expir’d before the flowers in their caps,
Dying or e’er they sicken’d ; ”

both

both because it is a scene, which must hurt humanity to dwell upon ; and because it would probably be said, that these things happened at a time, when the Constitution was evidently breaking. I have also for a similar reason purposely omitted, what otherwise might seem no small proof of the weakness of their system ; that, when by the bravery of a few, they had recovered their liberty out of the hands of a Tyrant, (who had wrested it from them by those very means, which they had entrusted to his care for its defence,) they could not preserve it ; merely as it should seem, because all traces of their former constitution were vanished, and there was not even the form of a government remaining for the fluctuating state to subsid in, after these storms were over ; though Cæsar before his death had been in quiet possession of his ill-got power for scarce five months.

I have however dwelt the longer upon this article of the Roman Government, because our own is so frequently and unjustly made to suffer in the comparison with it. — Let the structure indeed be only great, and however clumsy the architecture of it may be, it will always be stared and gazed at with wonder

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and applause. — If on the other hand, some should think, that by endeavouring to avoid this mistake, I had been tempted to treat this illustrious instance of human grandeur with rather too little respect; and should look upon those few strictures, which I have ventured to make upon it, as not sufficiently justified by the facts I have quoted in support of them; I would recommend it to such to reflect for a moment on the idea, which one, whose opinion should have much more weight with them than mine, has given of this Republic. “*Rome étoit un vaisseau tenu par deux ancrés dans la tempête, la religion et les mœurs* *.” — It must be owned the anchors, which are here assigned for it's security, are two of the best and strongest, that can be imagined: but surely a vessel in a storm, let it be held by whatever anchors you please, is such a situation, as no one would choose to be in, who was looking out in search of ease and happiness: And as it was with that view only, that I pretended to examine the merits of this government, I should hope, as far as authority can be any excuse for a mistake, I might stand free from any censure.

It

* *L'Esprit des Loix.* Liv. viii. Chap. 13.

It might notwithstanding be comparatively happy to be a citizen of Rome, rather than a subject of any of those unfortunate countries, whose liberties she trampled on; and whose very princes sometimes, to give a licentious mob a holiday, were drawn through her proud streets at the chariot wheels of a haughty Conqueror: nay, we may allow perhaps, that it must be happier to have been a Roman, than to have lived in any other state, which either then, or had before, existed: but what comparison can there be between the happiness to be met with in one of our modern well-regulated governments, and that which Rome could confer on its vain citizens? Rome! which, whatever other circumstances it might have to boast of, had always this dreadful draw-back upon happiness attending it, that it was scarce ever free from some remarkable calamity or other. *When things were tolerably quiet both from sedition and war, says the historian *, left we should at any time be free from fears and dangers of some sort or other, a most grievous pestilence arose.*

Far then from affronting my own country so much, as to suppose there could be any room

* Livy. “*Et ab seditione et a bello quietis rebus, quando a metu et periculis vacarent, pestilentia ingeorta.*”

for a comparison between it and Rome in the article of happiness, I would venture to assert, that if a man regarded principally a quiet passage through this world, with a comfortable subsistence, whilst he staid in it, he had better even be a *Dutchman* with all the contempt that character has lately fallen into, than have been a *Roman*, when that name implied all that was great and glorious.

Plagues, famines, and such alarming visitations are not indeed confined to any particular country; but may no doubt be properly regarded as the common instruments of God's moral government: they are not however so far such, as to be no way subject to the controul of human powers: if they were, how could we account for their happening most frequently, and their effects being always the most violent in the worst regulated states*? When therefore people have well considered, how far the rise and increase of these calamities depend upon

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* If some should be inclined to look upon these evils as always inflicted merely for the punishment of sins; it is to be hoped, they would at the same time allow, that this would prove there were more of these and greater too in such sort of states, than those, which are more civilized. With which allowance the argument would stand almost as much in my favor, as before.

the imperfection of the state, where they happen; when they have also well weighed of what importance the being secure from them is to human happiness; and when they have farther compared their frequency in different governments; they will I am persuaded, have little doubt remaining, whether our modern European Governments do not far excel, in the article of *comfortable Subsistence* at least, not only those we have been considering, but all others, that either have formerly been, or are at present in being among the ruder parts of mankind.

The consideration of what effects different climates may produce in these instances, will make no alteration in the state of this argument; since the same government will always be attended with a greater or less number of these calamities, according to the different stages of perfection it has arrived at, as plainly appears from the tenor of all history.*

As to *Security* and *Liberty*, we should perhaps, to be exact, consider them in the two

* One would not ask a question, which should be thought to tempt God; but one may surely ask, without incurring any suspicion of impiety, whether it is likely, that a fire, of the same nature with that in 1666, happening now in London would spread so far, as that did?

fold view of *internal* and *external*. Thus the Dutch enjoy a considerable share of liberty *within*, whilst *without* they seem to live in a most servile dependence upon their neighbours. But taking things in the gross, we may form a tolerable guess, from the view we have taken of their governments, in what degree the Ancients possessed these blessings. Had they however enjoyed them in much greater perfection than they did, we could hardly envy them the possession, when we know at how dear a rate they bought it. Ease, happiness, and life itself, are a high price to pay for any thing: and, when the purchase is made, to be obliged to hold it on that worst of tenures, war and military service, makes a large deduction indeed from it's value!

War in it's mildest aspect cannot be looked upon by humanity, without horror and aversion! but with us it may really seem to have put on a tame and gentle appearance, compared to it's former fierceness. Amongst the Ancients the loss of victory was the loss of every thing: liberty, property, wives, children, every right as men, and sometimes even life itself, were forfeited by those, who could not maintain them by the strength of their sword. When armies engaged on such terms as these, we cannot sup-

pose, that victory would be easily given up; or that it would not be pursued with cruelty and carnage; a circumstance, which should make a considerable abatement in our admiration of that courage they have been so highly praised for, since in all probability despair was most commonly it's genuine parent. In Greece too (and at Rome, till by the amazing success of it's arms there were no neighbouring enemies left to disturb it) the mischiefs and miseries of war must have been still more sensibly felt, as it was always carried on almost at their own doors, and the whole nation were eye-witnesses of, and bore an immediate part in the distress it occasioned: though by being inured to it they did not perhaps suffer so much, as we might apprehend: nay they seem sometimes to have entered into these broils almost for sport, to flesh their young heroes and give their soldiers a little air and exercise! — The more civilized and more respectable states of Europe, on the contrary have not felt the calamities of war in their own territories, at least to any degree, now for many years: — they have sagely chose out a kind of pit to decide their quarrels upon at a distance from home. — But, O unhappy people, who are thus condemned to bear the ills, occasioned by the pride and injustice

of others, for what crime of yours is this evil come upon you ! — Is it because you already inhabit one of the worst countries in Europe, that they envy you your hard fare, and so cruelly rob you of your poor provision ! — Or is it, that the fell spirit of war has begun at length to relent a little of it's fury, and being ashamed any longer to lay waste the labors of art and industry, where a more perfect civilization has taken place, is content to skulk and hide itself amidst fens and marshes ! How must one wish, that the inconveniences attending those, who pursue it there, may dispose them still more to listen to the voice of peace ; and that the present violent efforts, which the contending parties are on all sides making, may be the last struggles and dying agonies of the monster War !

Ill should I deserve the name of Englishman, if I did not prize liberty as the highest of all earthly blessings. Still therefore, if you please, let her be worshipped even as a goddess ! but surely it is high time to cease offering up to her so many human sacrifices !

Mr. *Rousseau* prophetically says *, that *national enmity will soon be extinct* : but, he adds with seeming concern, *it will be with*

* Page 9.

the love of our country †". — Happy would it be for the world, if men could get rid of the first without the loss of the other! though perhaps the parting even with this might not be attended with such bad consequences, as he seems to apprehend. What a glorious character would a true *citizen of the world* be! — And if we trace the progress of government from it's first rise in a single family perhaps, to a city, a commonwealth, a kingdom; who can say, that it may not end at last in a much more comprehensive form? if universal monarchy has a bad sound, suppose it be a large fœderative community!

War can only be justified by considering it as a necessary means to defend ourselves in the possession of some rights, essential to our happiness, which others either have not,

† How the love of our country, which is plainly the offspring of society, carefully nursed up by the cunning and contrivance of those, who were desirous of maintaining the forms of government, under which they lived, happens to have interested Mr. Rousseau so far in it's favor, as to make him solicitous for it's continuance, one is rather at a loss to guess. — As in general he seems to think society has done so much harm in the world, one should conclude, that to keep up a consistency, he would say, the sooner it was dissolved the better — if then the love of our country has any share in supporting it, why is he so alarmed at the likelihood of it's being lost?

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or want to take from us. But if all mankind were arrived at an equal, or even a tolerable degree of civilization, and were possessed of equal, or nearly equal rights and privileges; what would it signify, where one was born, or of what particular district one became a citizen? — Not but that there would always remain, upon any supposition, attachment enough to our native country to answer any good purpose. And if genuine christianity had taken place, uncorrupted by depraved systems and political abuses; who can say, by that extensive benevolence, which it teaches, of considering all mankind as brethren, nay as members one of another, how near it might already have brought the world to the state, we have been contemplating? — The prospect, which such a view of things lays open to the mind, would be a most pleasing one to dwell upon; but I have already digressed too far.

To return then; something perhaps in favor of former policy, and to the disadvantage of such improvements as I have been speaking of, may be collected from the great populousness * of antient states. — But what

wil!

* In which article however they, who have read Mr. Hume's very sensible and ingenious essay on the subject, will think proper perhaps to make considerable abatements.

will the argument of populousness, allowed to the utmost extent, prove at last? — States may breed men, as the Scotch and Irish do cattle, merely for sale; to dispose of them for slaves; or to let them out to fight for pay. If an easy provision for children encourages population, what method of providing for them can be so easy, as to get them presently knocked on the head? But surely the above conditions of existence neither prove the happiness of the individuals, who are condemned to them, nor the perfection of those states, which give birth to such miserable beings. And it would be well if the warm advocates for population, whose zeal however is highly commendable, would determine with a little more precision, than they hitherto have, or possibly soon will do, how far the numbers of men in a community may be increased, consistently with the good of the whole. They should be able to tell us with the same accuracy, which guides the skillful gardener or nursery-man, how many of these plants will grow in a particular spot, without injury to each other. They should tell us, how many may be crowded into a narrow space, without destroying each other's growth and health; without intro-

ducing

ducing plagues and pestilential disorders. It may be easy to see, where desolation takes place, and that it is an evil, which wise governors especially should by all means strive to remedy: but it is not so easy to know, when we have got a just proportion. Should we be as many, as may be supported by the produce of the earth in a fruitful season? What then is to become of us in a less plentiful year? Should we be as many, as may live upon the ordinary encrease of cattle amongst us? what is to be our fate, should an accidental distemper destroy their numbers? It is no doubt the will, and was the first command of Heaven, that we should "encrease and multiply;" but it is only till we have "replenished the earth:" which surely we cannot construe to mean "without all bounds," or, "till we have overstocked it." If our own sense will not teach us this, reverence for the wisdom of Him, who gave this precept, should persuade us to believe it. People may admire, if they please, the populousness of China; but it seems to me a degradation of the species to make men live, as they are said to do there, like the lowest of animals, on refuse and carrion.

Some

Some may fancy also, that the love of country, and great strength of attachment, which was shewn by the ancients to their governments, is another proof in their favor; as if those constitutions could not be bad ones, which were capable of engaging the affections of their members in so strong a degree. But they, who fancy this, will not be such, as have with any degree of attention considered, what sort of things are capable of forming the strongest attachments to them. They, who will attentively look at the different governments and different sects of religion, that have been in the world; far from collecting any thing in their favor from the zeal and bigotry of those, who live under them, will perhaps be inclined to conclude, that the more imperfect any of these have been, the more strenuous have their advocates been in defending them. Just as it is seen in families, where if there be a child more weakly or less worthy than the rest, it is usually in the same proportion, the favorite of it's fond parents : perhaps, because it requires more of their attention and care to rear it, or make it good for any thing; and whilst they are bestowing the necessary pains to this purpose, it insensibly steals into their favor and affections.

But be this as it may; is it not true, that every particular mode and sect of Christianity has been more strenuously espoused, and more industriously defended, than Christianity itself, except by its early assertors, who were clearly influenced by more than human feelings? Yet even in those early times, it may be collected from the account of an Apostle himself, that many were more anxious to be thought "of Paul, or of Apollos", than of Christ. Have not bigots always proceeded with a more fiery heat in their disputes with each other, than in those against the common enemy? * And may we not farther assert, that the zeal of each sect, in propagating its tenets, has always risen the higher in those instances, where they bore the least resemblance to Christianity? how indeed can we otherwise account for the success, which many of these sects have had

* In a country, where that utmost disgrace to all humanity and religion, the INQUISITION obtains, and charitably anticipates the punishments of Hell, by inflicting them here upon earth; had not any one, whose misfortune it was to live there, better be suspected of atheism, than of heresy? And if he respected his temporal ease and quiet only, would it not be safer for him even to blaspheme God, than to speak any thing disrespectful of his HOLINESS the POPE?

had in the world; but that the devisers of them had let their notions down to a certain pitch of absurdity and imperfection, suited to the tastes and palates of those who should embrace them?

However, not to insist more than is necessary on so tender a topic, as people's religious prejudices; let us turn the subject to the point from whence we set out, from religion to the state.

One may ask then, who ever shewed a greater degree of attachment, than the Loylists of our own country in King Charles the First's time? But to what was their attachment shewn? — To a set of principles, which are not only a disgrace to our most excellent constitution, if it once was so indeterminate as to afford any just grounds for them; but to human nature itself, which could ever be weak enough to embrace them; — To the worst and meanest of all principles, *passive obedience, divine hereditary indefeasible right*, and a prerogative founded upon that right, which was to do, whatever it pleased, with our lives, liberties, and every thing else, that is most valuable and dear to us. It cannot be said, that the attachment to liberty and better principles was stronger than

than this. The cause indeed of liberty, as it was called, did in the end prevail; but it was not the spirit of liberty, I doubt, that either dictated the covenant, or by which Cromwell attached the minds of his followers to *the good old Cause*.

To close then at last this long disquisition; whatever merit Greece or Rome may have, what other satisfactory reason can be assigned, why their governments should excell modern ones, but this; that they had much wiser lawgivers, and more learned philosophers, than we have? the contrary of which it is to be hoped, has been in some degree already proved. Of this however we may be sure, that if their governments were better calculated to promote the happiness of their members; it could only be, because they made them more virtuous, than our's; a point, which is to be enquired into hereafter. — In the mean time, it may not be amiss to look a little more narrowly after what has been so frequently called our happiness; to see whether in fact there be any such thing, and in what it principally consists; that we may be better satisfied how far improvements in the world have a tendency to promote it.

C H A P. VI.

Of Happiness.

I Cannot repeat the title, on which I am going to write, without reflecting, how many thousands are at this very instant *practically* engaged in the same inquiry! — by how many various ways too are they all pursuing the same end! — view those two ships there with their bended sails! from whatever port they came, or how different soever the courses may be, which they seem to steer, Happiness is the harbour, to which they both are bound! with whatever goods they may be freighted, wherever they may be driven by storms or adverse winds, or on whatever coast they may accidentally touch; this at last is the haven, where both the pilots and all the passengers on board desire to be!

Not only those however, “who go down to the sea in ships,” are engaged in this pursuit; — nor does happiness dwell particularly on foreign shores, whatever expectations men may have to find her there; — she is sought for with the same zeal, and perhaps with better success much nearer home!

Every

Every individual in short of our whole species, in whatever occupation they may be separately employed; whether they are digging, fighting, waiting behind a counter, or studying in a closet; all are paying their court to the same sovereign mistress of their wishes; and these various employments are but so many different methods of suing for her favor.

Must we conclude then with the surly Moralist, that they are all mistaken; that they are all in search of nothing but disappointment?—Why, O Gracious Creator, Author and Parent of every good, Why are we taught to look upon the life thou hast given us, as only a gloomy passage through a vale of misery and sorrow? From which if we turn aside ever so little, either to the right hand or to the left, into those flowery plains, or tempting groves, which every now and then appear to our view, and invite our approach; we shall meet with nothing but vexation! instead of flowers we shall gather thorns; and if we offer to taste that specious fruit, which looks so alluring to the eye; like the apples of Sodom it will fill our mouth with dust and ashes! — what is still more hard, even in this dreary path, in which it seems

we are appointed to walk, unless we are perpetually upon our guard, with eyes for ever fixt upon our steps; — nay, unless we are favored with some superior assistance and direction, we are liable every moment to fall into a variety of traps and snares, which an enemy has set in our way; and in the end to have those temporary evils, with which we find it now so difficult to struggle, changed into others infinitely worse, and confirmed upon us by a perpetual decree for ever!

Reflect a little, ye who pretend to measure out infinite goodness by your own contracted dispositions, what good purpose these lessons of your's are calculated to answer! Why would you restrain God's mercy to some distant period for it's exertion? Or why would ye have us think, that to become fit objects of it we must be wretched? Was it misery that recommended us to our kind Creator's care, e'er yet we had a being? Or did his kindness cease with that single act? Are we not on the contrary repeatedly told, in a number of expressions to the same effect, which abound in every page of the Scriptures, "that the Lord has pleasure in the prosperity of his servants" and "that he hath given us richly all things to enjoy"? Why then

then would ye lessen his benefits in our estimation; or deter us from using them? Can ye imagine, that teaching us to think lightly of his present bounty is the likeliest method to make us thankful for it, or to rely upon him with greater confidence for future favours? Surely the more sensible we are of the worth of any thing, the more gratitude we must always retain towards the giver of it, and the more desirous shall we be of preserving it; or, if we must needs part with it for a time, the more solicitous shall we be to regain it hereafter. He alone who looks upon his life as a curse, can want to throw it away, or be indifferent, whether ever he shall receive it again!

Far therefore from considering ourselves as placed in a condition, like that of Tantalus, where the means of happiness are only thrown in our way to mock and disappoint us, we may surely make the following conclusions; — that it is to the Goodness of God we owe our present existence; in which it was his gracious intention, we should be as happy, as in such a situation we are capable of being: — that whatever our reason recommends to us upon a fair examination, as having a tendency to improve our

circumstances, will, if properly used, have that effect to a certain degree: — and that he, who endeavours to make himself and others the happiest he can, pays the greatest honor, and performs the most acceptable service to his Creator; whose all-seeing wisdom can as easily judge of our comparative merit by our using properly the means of happiness, which his bounty has bestowed, as by our submitting cheerfully to those evils, which imperfection must needs bring with it.

If there be such a thing as happiness here below; or, to soften the phrase as much as may be for those, who are out of humor with it; — if there be any thing, which makes one mode of existence preferable to another, or can render the same sort more perfect; why should it be thought so deeply hid from our sight, as that we should never be able to discover it, or in the least to penetrate through the thick cloud, that surrounds it? With an eye capable of discerning almost every thing else, why should man be made blind to that alone, which it concerns him chiefly to know? — That he may frequently forget the end he should pursue; and that he may still more frequently mistake

mistake the means, which he should use for the attainment of this end, is what may easily be expected from the many frailties of his nature. But that this should always, or even generally be the case, — seems neither to be consistent with the goodness of God, nor with the character of a rational creature.

Every one therefore, who is engaged in any pursuit, that is not vicious, — that does not interfere with the just rights or known good of another; whatever occasional mistakes or miscarriages he may fall into, may reasonably hope, upon the whole, to promote not only his own present happiness, but that of all others, as far as the little circle, of which he is the center, reaches. Society could not, without a miracle, be upheld on any other supposition: at least it seems entirely agreeable to the other instances of kindness, which the Deity has shewn to his creatures, that whatever he has made necessary for their well-being, should be attended with some degree of pleasure, even in the very performance of it.

In what particular profession or course of life happiness is most likely to be found, is not a point so easy to determine. What however was intended as a general good, would

not, it is probable, be confined to any particular situation, to be come at only by a single avenue. Happiness therefore we may suppose, is to be met with both in the city, and in the country; in the palace, and in the cottage; nor does she intirely avoid either the barren heath, or more unwholesome marshes. If there be any particular path, that would bring us more directly to her principal dwelling; it is wisely hid from common observation: it might otherwise be so crowded, that the travellers would hinder each other's progress. How would the other offices of life be filled; if it was known, that happiness was annexed to one alone? — If to be a poet or a philosopher, was to be happy; who would be a merchant or a soldier?

It is however extremely probable, that more happiness is to be found in one way of life, than another; though at the same time so constituted is human nature, that this can never be generally known, or believed to be true. So various are the dispositions and tempers of men, you might as soon persuade them all to like one and the same sort of food, as to make them all think alike in the article of happiness. Hence

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the being freed from uncertainty in this instance is a piece of knowledge, which, if it could be had, would be of no use to mankind; unless either their nature was intirely altered, or it could be shewn, that their greatest happiness consisted in something, which might be carried on, and attended to, consistently with their other pursuits.

But notwithstanding the unpromising appearance of such an attempt, abundance of pains has been taken to point out and recommend several different things as productive of our greatest good. There are as many *summum Bonum's* or *greatest Goods* to be met with in the systems of old philosophers, as there are *best* horses and *best* dogs to be heard of in the discourses of some modern Sportsmen. Each have their favourites, which they would have every body else believe to be the best in the world. And though there may not be perhaps, and it might be difficult to say which of the two parties would least choose to have it thought there was, much resemblance between them in other particulars; yet whichever of them may be looked upon as injured by the comparison, they are both wonderfully alike in carrying on their disputes with great warmth, and

abundance of words; whilst all that can be gathered, on either side, from their Being, warmest commendations, and eagrest contentions, is only the strength of their own few sentiments, for where many things are nearly equal, it must be almost impossible to him to point out such a pre-eminence in any one, as shall not be liable to some controversy in favour of the others.

It may be immaterial to trace out the would spring from whence one of these parties have derived their mistake; but that of the other seems plainly to have arisen from too narrow and confined a view of what constitutes human happiness: — men have been fond in this, as in many other instances, of giving too great a degree of uniformity and simplicity to what has in itself extremely little either. Hence the many fine-spun schemes for happiness, which different philosophers, according to the peculiar cast of their own temper and disposition, have drawn out with immense application, and from their great love for human kind have given to the world, as clues to conduct us through the mazy paths, that lead to the fancied residence of true and sincere pleasure: — which it were endless, as well as needless to recount.

But the happiness of such a compound Being, as man is, cannot well be supposed to depend on any one single, or even on any few simple principles: like his life, and in-
deed like almost every thing else that belongs to him, it must be a kind of aggregate made up of many various, and even opposite materials: to reckon up all of which, and assign each their proper share in this business, would require a degree of nicety and skill, far beyond what I affect to be master of. Some of the principal parts however are so plain and obvious, that we can hardly be mistaken in them. Such are the following; that as a *sensible* and a *rational* Being, man's happiness must consist in the perfection of his senses, and the improvement of his reason; as a *social* and *dependent* one, in virtue, religion, and the good order of society.

If this be the case, we must extend the ground plan of happiness a little farther, than has usually been done. — However inferior in point of ingenuity this method of building may seem, when compared to that where a fine fabric, by the cunning contrivance of the Architect, is made to rest on one single prop, or point; yet what is lost in elegance by this means, will, one may reasonably hope, be made up in strength and stability. One may

define happiness then to be the sum of agreeable or pleasant perceptions, hopes, reflexions and expectations, which any one enjoys.

To know however, whether any man is to be reckoned happy on the whole; we must subtract from this sum every thing he meets with of an opposite kind; which, alas! will often make too large a deduction! But, if existence be a blessing, (which I imagine is a point, that will not be much controverted, at least by those who think it the gift of a benevolent Creator; setting aside at present the precarious arguments which are drawn from appearances, and which make either for or against this question, according to the skill of him, who draws them;) we may conclude in general, if not in every particular instance, that there will be a balance of something positive on the side of happiness.

If we are farther curious to know, whether one man is happier, than another; we must enquire, whether this balance on stating the account, other things being alike, is larger in one case, than in the other:— and if the sums be equal, whether, and in what degree, the quality is different. For, supposing every one's life to be so nearly divided between pleasure and pain, as that there shall only be one moment's surplusage

left on the side of pleasure; yet in that moment how exquisite might the enjoyments of one man be! How flat and insipid those of another! — Increase the numbers on each side of the account to whatever length you will, the difference at the bottom, between the largest and smallest sums, may be no more, than one; — yet the different worth, or excellence of that one, may be as great, as it is in our common accounts, when the same figure stands in the place of units, or in that of thousands. And this difference may arise either from the quickness of sense, which people are indued with, or from the value of those objects, which they are contemplating.

On the same principles, we may prosecute our inquiry a little farther, into the different degrees of happiness, allotted to different kinds of existence.

That Being which has no feelings (if such may be called a Being) must as to happiness be in a state of absolute quiescence or suspension: — that is, as it can enjoy neither one nor the other, it's happiness and misery may each be represented by 0. Indue it with one degree of perception, and it becomes immediately capable of happiness or misery, as that sense meets with objects agreeable or disagreeable;

agreeable; — the balance however by supposition being always something positive on the side of happiness, we will suppose it, in this first instance, to be equal to 1. If another sense be added, like the former, opening a second avenue to pleasure and pain; the result, in this case as well as in the other, being a degree of positive pleasure, it will follow, that a Being, induced with two senses, is happier than that, which has only one: and so we might assert of those, which have 3, 4, or 5 of these inlets; each of them, as it is limited to an inferior number, being always to be reckoned less happy, than that which is next above it.

One necessary limitation must however always be attended to in this case, that both the number and degrees of perception in any being must be such, as are suited to the particular frame and situation of it; — in the proper adjustment of which, the wisdom of the contriver will be most clearly seen. — The happiness of a mole might be ruined by the sense of sight; — or, to borrow the philosophy of the poet,

The Lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to day;
Had he thy reason; would he skip and play?

An Angel might, and probably would, be less happy, than we are, was he confined to

our particular circumstances and situation. Just as the connoisseur, who was banished to Siberia, might be made wretched by his fine feelings and delicate sensibility.

But with respect to man at large, he has not only the power of bettering himself, but also the things around him; and they both usually mend together; it having been our Creator's kind care thus to provide for us a continual increase of happiness.

What is true too of the number of senses, must be true also of their degrees of perfection; so that if they are either by nature more perfect, in one Being than another, or are capable of being made so by art, the pleasure perceived by them will be more intense. How much more sensible for instance must the pleasure be, which a musical ear, or an eye of taste receives, than what is felt by the gross, uninformed organ of the multitude? This however must be understood with the same restriction, as was made above; — for was this musical ear condemned to suffer the perpetual grating of a stone-cutter's yard, or the harsh noise of a razor-grinder's wheel; it would but little increase the happiness of its possessor: — nor would an eye of taste, tied down to the single contemplation of

Hockley

Hockley in the Hole, and it's environs, bring tuary, in much pleasure to it's master.

As a farther abatement still to this reasoning, some will perhaps say, that, when the clown stares, with gaping admiration, at the new dawbed sign, which my Landlord at the Lion has just hung out, it is a Guido or a Raphael to him: — and when he listens to the Love-Ditty, chaunted in alternate strains cross the street, between the hoarse Ballad-singer and his shriller mate, his enjoyments are as great, as the philosopher's would be to hear the music of the spheres.

If such sayings deserve any serious answer; we may observe, that to the clown there is but one thing, and he can hardly tell even what that is, which strikes his admiration: whereas the improved eye and ear can discover a thousand circumstances of design, disposition, harmony, proportion, contrast, &c. besides a thousand other nameless graces, strokes, and touches, which make them devour, with such eager and greedy attention, those pieces, which challenge their regard.

What has been affirmed of the number and degrees of perceptions, holds true also of the number of objects and their quality. And hence we see how Music, Painting, Sta-

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ringuary, all the plastic, and diversifying Arts * tend to promote the happiness of mankind; and of the same tendency must riches, honors, and all the other creatures of civil life be reckoned.—They may be faultily pursued, or abused, when obtained; and so may nature's gifts, health and food; but this, as has been before observed, tends not in the least to prove, that the things themselves are bad.

To make then a general conclusion, one may affirm, that the world at large is capable of bestowing more happiness on it's inhabitants, according to the degrees of improvement made in it; — and that every particu-
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* Some of these arts may possibly injure the health of those individuals, who are immediately employed in the execution of them; but nothing can be more groundless than Mr. *Rousseau*'s general censure mentioned page 20; “en devenant sociable il devient foible, craintif, &c. et sa manière de vivre achève d'enlever sa force et son courage:” they must be strong arguments indeed, which could induce one to believe that society and domestic life tend to enfeeble the strength or diminish the courage of mankind, when matter of fact seems plainly on the other side; the civilized Europeans being stronger in general, and more capable of enduring labor and hardships, than the natives of North America: and as much as an open engagement with an enemy, in a fair field of battle, is more honorable than bush-fighting, so much do they also exceed them in the article of courage.

lar man is, or may be happy, in † proportion to the advantages, whether of nature or of art, which he enjoys; — and farther, as intelligence is the greatest distinction, that can be enjoyed; one may venture to assert, that all knowledge, of whatever kind it be, not only that, which has plainly a connexion with use and practice, but even the most abstract and speculative, if it only tends to enlarge a man's perceptions, promotes his happiness. So that, other circumstances being alike, he, who knows the most, will always be the happiest man.

This

† This proportion however is not to be rated according to what a man may expect from these advantages beforehand, as fancy and opinion are extremely apt to outrun sound judgement; but according to their real values, which they all undoubtedly have.

I am not ignorant, how great a draw-back this makes in my account. But when I set out to consider Man's happiness; I did not forget, that he had passions and appetites, or that these, however they may occasionally either hinder or promote his good, would frequently make him act in a manner very different from common expectation; all therefore which I ever meant to assert, was only this; that so far as he can be looked upon as a rational creature and so far as reason can be supposed to have an influence in determining his actions, he will be happier in proportion to the knowledge, which he himself and others, among whom he is placed, have acquired.

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This reasoning however must not be extended to other animals, who are not masters of themselves*. A *Chien Sçavant* may, for ought I know, be the most miserable of his species; — the knowledge, which is taught him, is imposed upon him by a kind of violence, and is of no use, when learnt. Beings, whose faculties are of a certain, definite extent, must act within the sphere, which is measured out to them by that extent; — but to what bounds shall we limit such a Being, as shews in himself an evident capacity of acquiring daily new degrees of perfection, and of enlarging the former circle, which circumscribed his powers?

There is no knowledge, (at least none that can be attained by the use of his own faculties) which can be said to be improper for such a Being; and such a Being is man: consequently, the farther he looks back into what is past; — and the more clearly he perceives what is to come;

— the

* It is far however from being true, that the mere naming these animals for domestic use does such an injury to them either in their beauty, strength or agility, as Mr. *Rousseau* seems to lay to it's charge p. 20. the philosopher's cat might perhaps just then appear a little dull and drowsy; but had he turned his eyes towards the generous steed in training: — he would certainly have altered his opinion.

— the more in short he thinks upon God, nature, and himself; — the better is he enabled to set a right value upon things; and the better does he know, what fears are groundless, and what hopes he may with safety cherish; that is, how to banish uneasiness, and to be happy.

Neither is there any thing in this, which is inconsistent with their being extremely happy, who know much less, and who never look beyond the narrow sphere, in which they move. To them, who know no better, what they have is best. The inhabitant of Nova Zembla, who knows nothing of the earth's shape, or of the inclination of it's orbit to it's axis, and who never left his native soil; may fancy, that his half year's night is no longer, than what is common; and that he enjoys as much of the sun's clearing rays, as any other inhabitant upon the globe. But yet this will not prove, that those, who are *born under a better sun* and live in a *happier* climate, are not more indebted to nature's kindness, than he is.

The rock-adhering Oyster, it is possible if it thinks at all, may think, that nothing is capable of a higher degree of motion, or is endued with brighter parts, than it en-

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yoys; though the utmost stretch of these can reach no farther, than merely to the opening of it's shell, at stated times, to suck in food and nutriment. But who would reckon it any proof, that man was of no nobler make, nor designed for any higher enjoyments, than this almost vegetable animal, because it might possibly think so?

With what infinite satisfaction does the illustrious King of Manacabo * assert, "that

no

* In a Paper said to be an extract from the Preamble of a Treaty, between this great Potentate and our East-India Company, are contained, amongst others of the same nature, the following most pompous declarations on his part; — "I the said King am a very high King: — I am Lord of all Sumatra: — I am such a King, that, under the sun, there is no such King like unto me: — the whole world is mine, and I am the owner thereof; — what was nobody's hitherto, is mine." The proofs which he brings in support of this assumed dignity, are some of them pleasant enough; — "I have an enchanted cock, that sings but three times in a year, which I found on the coast of China; that nobody has such a cock, as I have. — I have a knife, that has but one edge, which nobody may use, except myself; — the gold of my mine is of twelve colours: — I have an iron cap and a baiu, that forty men cannot carry; but I have a soldier, that can carry them; and that nobody has such another soldier, as I have," &c. — men can seriously talk thus; can act under such persuasions; and yet at the same time be thought in

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no King is so great a King, as he is?" Yet something more must be necessary to prove this, besides the strength of his own persuasion; or otherwise, we could turn out some twenty or thirty straw-throned Kings, whose whole dominions extend no farther, than the walls of their cells; and whose only subjects are the vermin, which inhabit there; who yet if opinion would prove the point, are far greater Kings, than even this mighty monarch of Manacabo!

their sound mind; might it not make an ingenuous problem to determine, at what precise point of irrationality madness commences?

CHAP. VI.

Of an Equality in Happiness.

IT is however a favorite position with some, that there is an equal share of happiness in all states of life. To prove this, they shew great ingenuity in picking out every little spot and blemish, which may abate the splendor, or cast a kind of shade upon the bright side of fortune's favors; and are curious to place in the most striking point of view, every the minutest circumstance, which may recommend, or set off, what otherwise might appear to be the less eligible lots. Their design too in this seems laudable: they would reconcile men to the situations, in which they are placed; and would give them favorable sentiments of God's dealings with them.

But notwithstanding this fair appearance:— notwithstanding we must with them allow, that there is not such a very enviable difference among the various conditions of life, as man's wayward fancy is too apt to suggest: and though we may farther own, that the higher we ascend, however we may increase our prospect, and command a larger circle of pleasures and enjoyments, than those, who are placed in the vale below; yet our

situation becomes in proportion more dangerous, and is exposed to many a storm and tempest, which the other is secure from. Whatever concessions may be made in these and such like points ; yet unless there still remain a very considerable difference in the article of happiness, between one mode of existence and another ; for what purpose can the Deity have bestowed such various degrees of perfection on his creatures ?

For upon the same principles, which are brought to shew that such a difference does not obtain between one man and another* it would be easy to prove, that it does not subsist between a man, and the beast, on which he rides ; nor between the horse, and the poor reptile, which at the next step he will trample into dust.

And, though it may answer very good purposes to humble men into a mean opinion of this world's goods, and of this life's happiness, when compared to the transcendent joys of another ; yet we shall go beyond our purpose, if we do not still let it be

though

* “ *Homini homo quid praestat ! stulto intelligens qui interest !* ” Are sentences however, which, if they could be divested of the *comic humor* so long annexed to them, would be found to contain maxims of true philosophy.

thought a blessing ; and such a one, as may well claim our utmost gratitude to the giver of it, even for his present bounty, exclusive of any farther prospect. But if we reduce it to so low an estimation, as to think it of no higher worth, than what a worm enjoys ; how weak and faint must our gratitude needs be !

Besides, the surest, if not the only ground of expecting future happiness (exclusive of a direct promise) seems to be the certainty of possessing some share of it at present. For what reason can we have to think, that the Deity will ever make us happy, if he has not already done it ? But if he has made us happy at present, we have the fairest prospect of always continuing so, where-ever we exist. — And if we are to be more happy hereafter, what can so effectually persuade us to believe this, as the experience of finding ourselves and all the world around us, daily growing so at present ?

It would be well then, if men would be a little more cautious in advancing things for principles, which in their practice they must needs contradict. For let their words be what they will, nature has taken care to make them fond of their existence, and of enjoying it in the best manner, they can.

C H A P. VII.

Of what is called the State of Nature.

BUT they, who contend for a decline in human affairs, may still tell us, that Nature, who knew best how to consult for the good of her offspring, had placed us in a very different state from that, in which we now are: and that consequently we have forfeited all claim to happiness at her hands, by * quitting that *simple, uniform, and solitary* manner of living, which she had prescribed to us.

It becomes necessary therefore to inquire, what may be properly called a state of Nature; and how far she may be said to have prescribed any thing to us in this case.

The state, in which mankind should make their first appearance, must indeed have been almost necessarily such an one, as is above described; unless they had sprung up all at once, like Cadmus's men, armed at all points, in full perfection both of body and mind.

* Mr. Rousseau ascribes all the evils we endure to this origin; almost all of which, he says, we should have avoided, "en conservant la maniere de vivre *simple, uniforme, et solitaire*, qui nous étoit prescrit par la nature." See above page 109.

and completely furnished with all truths and arts requisite, if not to promote, at least to preserve their well being. For otherwise Nature, by appointing a kind of infancy for the world, as well as for mankind in it, will appear to have prescribed very differently, in this respect, from what she is above said to have done: and it would be as absurd to suppose, that she intended we should stop there in the one, as in the other instance; since she has plainly furnished the means, or rather has almost imposed a necessity, of advancing to an age of greater strength, perfection, and maturity in both cases.

Every different state then, which mankind have either passed through, or at present make their appearance in, has almost an equal claim to the title of *a state of nature*: since it can have been nothing but nature, in one sense or another, which has placed them there. If any in particular however is to be distinguished by this name, as being more peculiarly suited to man's nature, than the rest; I should not hesitate to conclude, that it was a state, which lay still before us; one, at which we had not yet fully arrived; not one, which we had long since left behind us; that Golden age, which never yet existed

but in the Poets fancy, if ever it is to have a more real existence, being still reserved for distant posterity.

Of what a very whimsical and capricious nature must happiness be in their opinion, who suppose, that as soon as mankind began to open their eyes, and look at it, it should vanish and disappear !

But men may make whatever suppositions their fancy leads them to ; and they may have a right of calling these suppositions, which are the genuine offspring of their own brain, by whatever names they choose. They may therefore, if they please, call that of the Savage, the state of nature : and there may be some, unworthy of a better state, who may think, they could have been happier in that, than they are in their present situation. The man, who by his vices has violated his conscience ; and who, besides the inward uneasiness arising from thence, finds himself embarrassed with many outward inconveniences ; may with some reason envy even the child, who is yet in full possession of his innocence ; and who is therefore intirely unacquainted with those ills, which the loss of it has made the other feel.

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that perpetual childhood was designed to be, either the true state of nature, or of man's greatest happiness. The child, it is probable, is either, for want of thought, insensible of his happiness; or, if he thinks, he will in consequence of that, eagerly press forward to what he is led to believe, will be the happier state of manhood.

There is besides no doubt to be made, but that every state, and every different mode of existence, in which it might have pleased our gracious Creator to place us, would contain in it more happiness, than misery, enough to make it a blessing: this, infinite wisdom might have contrived a thousand different ways, unknown to us: we might, and undoubtedly should have been happy, had God given us fewer faculties, and those of less perfection, than what his kinder bounty has bestowed: but then this would not have been the happiness of such Beings, as we are; it would not have been the happiness of such a particular class of rational creatures, as we belong to.

And it is exceedingly clear, call it by what ill, name you will, that state could never be designed for any Being to continue in, which allows respects but half it's nature, and that too the worst.

worst. Surely if there must needs be an exclusion made, the inferior should give place, and our greatest attention be paid to that, which most deserves it.

But the true state for any Being to enjoy happiness in, must be such an one, as gives him an opportunity of exercising all his faculties, and of satisfying all his desires. If a Being is of a compound nature, that state, in which the several parts of this composition are consulted, and bear their proper share of employment, is the natural state for such a being to be happy in. If, lastly, one part of this Being's nature is so formed, as to be capable of an increase of perfection, from the mere exertion of it's own inherent powers; it must of consequence follow, that the happiness of such a Being will be in a state of continual progression from less to greater: and this will hold true of man, whether it is applied to the species at large, or to each separate individual; at least, if we stop anywhere short of diseased and feeble old age.

The examination however of this matter in every particular instance would be an inquiry of too great extent for the present undertaking. But let any one, who is inclined to dispute the truth of this assertion,

if he is at all advanced beyond the giddy stage of youth, only just ask himself seriously, how far he could wish to be carried backward in the course he has run, in order to go it over again, in the same manner, he had done before; and he will soon find, how very small a part, of what is past, is equal to his present condition, be that almost what it will. What is apt to lead people into mistakes in this instance, is, that they remember much better what gave them pleasure, than what gave them pain.—But though there may be many scenes of past life, which, could one have them independently of what went before, or followed after, a man might be glad to act over again. Yet who, that reflects upon the many follies he has been guilty of, and the number of difficulties they have thrown him into; what a silly empty thing he was for many years; the phane of every puff and gust of passion; a mere *pipe*, not only *for fortune's finger* (as the Poet has it) but for the finger of every knave *to stop what note he pleased upon*, — would wish to be again the same fool and dupe he has been? As soon might the ship-wrecked mariner, now safe upon the beach, wish to be again the sport of those winds and waves, which had already

buffeted him so much! — I would venture to say, that the single satisfaction of looking back upon the dangers we have escaped, of knowing a little more what we are, and of seeing a little better into what people about us are doing, (which are all things, that the *anni euntos*, or *fleeting years*, are sure to leave behind them, whatever else they may rob us of,) will more than equal, of itself, without any other circumstances, (many however of which might be added,) all the loss we sustain by advancing forward in this mortal course, and what is true of each individual, that his life will be happier, as he advances in years, and grows more rational, is true also of the world at large; which in every other instance may be justly compared to a single person, except in this, that it can never feel the inconveniences of old age, but is perpetually renewed in strength and vigor.

So little reason * then is there to lament the decline of human happiness, or to pity those, who are yet to be born to greater misery,

* Notwithstanding what Mr. Rousseau in his ingenious manner says to the contrary, — ‘ Il y a, je le sens, un âge auquel l’homme individuel voudroit s’arrêter; tu chercheras l’âge auquel tu désirerois que ton espece se fut arrêtée. Mécontent de ton

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sery, than we suffer; that we may well congratulate ourselves on the high degree of perfection, to which the world has been advanced in our days; and may rather envy those, whom with our fortunes and our honors we shall leave to be heirs also of greater happiness.

Let no one however be afraid, lest upon this plan the growth of human happiness should be such in time, as to rob heaven of its votaries:—there will always be difference enough, — enough to animate the warmest wishes and to kindle the eagrest desires, — between what is perfect, and what is imperfect; — what, with a thousand other abatements, can last but for a few fleeting years, — and what, with every other circumstance that can recommend it to our choice, will continue for ever.

ton état présent, par des raisons qui annoncent à ta postérité malheureuse de plus grands mécontentemens encore peut-être voudrois tu pouvoir rétrograder; et ce sentiment doit faire l'elogie de tes premiers ayeux, la critique de tes contemporains, et l'effroi de ceux, qui auront le malheur de vivre après toi."

The End of the third Part.

ADVERTISEMENT.

PARTS the IVth and Vth of this ESTIMATE
or COMPARISON (in which the Author pro-
poses to consider the state of *Morality* at differen-
periods of the world, and to bring the whole down
to our *own Times* and Circumstances) will be pub-
lished some time next Winter.

